

# THE PANJAB PAST AND PRESENT

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VOLUME Q  
PART I-III

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Edited by  
GURDIT SINGH



PUBLICATION BUREAU  
PUNJAB UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

# THE PANJAB PAST AND PRESENT

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Volume-XI  
Part I- II

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*Edited by*  
**GANDA SINGH**



**PUBLICATION BUREAU  
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## Antiquity, Meaning and Origin of the Name Takshasila or Taxila

DR SAIFUR RAHMAN DAR\*

Much has been written about this city. Majority of the scholars, however, either keep silence over the meaning and origin of the name Taxila or just give different versions of the name as these occur in ancient literature and pass on. In this paper, I have tried to explain the origin and meaning of the name Taxila or Takshasila as it was known in ancient times.

Taxila or Takshasila is situated some 32 kilometers north-east of Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan. Today it is a small town. But in ancient times it was a great city renowned as a great centre for trade, education and science. Besides, all ancient religions of south-east Asia held this city in great esteem. Particularly, the followers of Buddhism spread its fame far and wide in Asia. In the Western world, fame of Taxila spread because this was the only city in Pakistan where Alexander the Great was received well and which, later on, Bactrian Greeks made their capital.

### **Personalities Associated with Taxila**

Taxila was one of the two greatest educational centres in Pakistan and India—the other being Nalinda in the Bihar province. The university of Takshasila, however, was famous for its teaching in science subjects, particularly the science of medicine.<sup>1</sup> This university produced some of the greatest names in the ancient history of the country. Among them Jivaka, the Great Physician of Rajagriha, was educated at Taxila.<sup>2</sup> Jivaka, son of Raja Bimbisara, was a contemporary and a great companion of Buddha. He donated the famous Jetvane Garden in Rajagriha

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\* Director, Lahore Museum, Lahore.

1. Mehta, Ratilal N., *Pre-Budhist India*—Based mainly on the Jataka Stories. (Bombay, 1939), Chap. I, Education, pp. 299-505.
2. Bigandet, R.R.P., *The Life or Legend of Gaudama—The Buddha of the Burmese* (London, 1911), pp. 195-199; Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (629-645 A.D.), II (London, 1905), pp. 150-51; and Buddha Parkash, *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab* (Lahore, 1976), p. 111.

to Buddha. Alexander,<sup>3</sup> Susima, son of Bindusara<sup>4</sup> and elder brother of Asoka, Asoka himself<sup>5</sup>, and his son Kunala<sup>6</sup> had lived in Taxila. Among other names associated with Taxila are Kumaralabha, the founder of Sautrantika School,<sup>7</sup> Ghosha, who was a contemporary of Asoka and was a great physician and an oculist or a specialist in eye-surgery,<sup>8</sup> Brahmadatta,<sup>9</sup> Setaketu,<sup>10</sup> etc. It is also believed that the famous grammarian Panini and scholar Patanjali used to teach at Taxila in 6th or 5th cent. B.C.; the illustrious Viyas lived in this city and composed his renowned epic poem *Mahabharata* here; Uddalika Aruni—the narrator of *Upanishda* and his son Suvita Keeto were educated at Taxila<sup>11</sup> and Jotipala son of Purohit of Raja of Kashi obtained his military education in the same city and later became the commander-in-chief of the King. Even Chandra Gupta Maurya and his Minister Kautilya—the author of *Arthashastra*, and Prasenajit, the enlightened Raja of Kosala, were also believed to have been educated in the university of the same city.<sup>12</sup>

3. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander the Great* (Loeb Classical Library Edition), V.8-2, and V. 3 6.
4. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India* (London, 1871), p. 106.
5. Thomas Watters, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I (London, 1904), p. 241. According to Tibetan traditions, Asoka died at Taxila (*Ibid.*). But it is not certain. However, he did rule at Taxila as Viceroy under his father Bindusara and later on as Emperor he built here at least one large stupa enshrining the relics of Buddha. Marshal, *Taxila* (Cambridge, 1951), I, p. 256. Also see *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235.
6. Thomas Watters, *Op. Cit.*, Kunala was Viceroy of Taxila where he lost his eyesight through the beguile of his step mother. Here Hieun Tsang saw one stupa consecrated to the memory of this prince (*Ibid.*, I, pp. 245-246; and II, 100, 295).
7. The famous Sastra-master and founder of Sautrantika School whose name in Chinese appears as Kou-mo-lo-lo-to (*Ibid.*, I, 245), or as T'ung-shou (*Ibid.*, II, pp. 286-89).
8. Probably the same Ghosha who restored Kunala's eye-sight at Taxila (*Ibid.*, I, p. 246). In Buddhist literature he is regarded as an arhat.
9. According to Rajovada Jataka, Brahmadatta was a future Buddha born as a Prince of Benares. At the age of 16, he went to Takshasila for purpose of education and became accomplished in all arts. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jataka Tales*, Vol. I (London, 1880), pp. xxii.
10. An Ex-student of Taxila university. Ratilal N. Mehta, *Op. Cit.*, p. 305.
11. Buddha Parkash, *Op. Cit.*, p. 82 and *Sibt-e-Hasan, Evolution of Civilization in Pakistan* (Urdu title: *Pakistan men Tehzeeb ka Irtiqa* (Karachi, 1975), pp. 48, 99, 103, 104, No. 112 and 120.
12. Buddha Parkash, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 140-141, 171-172, 182-183 and *Sibt-e-Hasan, Op. Cit.*, pp. 110-112. We learn from Pali chronicles that Kautilya, also known as Chanakya, was a resident of Takshasila (Buddha Parkash, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 179-180, 188).

## ANTIQUITY, MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME TAKSHASILA OR TAXILA

Prasenajit was also a contemporary of Buddha.<sup>13</sup>

### Religious Associations of the City

All the three ancient religions of Indo-Pakistan have tried to give an imaginary and remote history to this city. According to *Ramayana*,<sup>14</sup> Pushkalavati and Takshasila were founded by Bharta, the younger brother of Sri Ramchandrar. He appointed two of his sons, Taksha and Pushkala as rulers of these two cities. After them both the cities got their names, i.e., Takshakasila and Pushkalavati, respectively. *Mahabharata*<sup>15</sup> mentions that when Pandus could not rule Hastinapur (Delhi), they came to Taxila under the leadership of Parikshat and ruled here. Under him Taxila prospered. His son Janemjaya subjugated Naga tribes and performed here the great *Ashvamedha* or Horse Sacrifice. On this occasion the poet Viyas or Vaisampayna read full length of his long epic poem *Mahabharata* for the first time.<sup>16</sup> In vedas, it is mentioned that at Takshasila were taught the 18 arts or 'Sippas.'<sup>17</sup> Pali texts narrate at length how Brahmana youths, Khattiya princes and sons of Setthis from Rajagriha, Kashi, Koshala and other places went to Takshasila for learning the Vedas and eighteen sciences and arts.<sup>18</sup>

According to Jaina traditions, millions of years ago, the first Trithankara Rshabhanatha came here and left his foot-prints.<sup>19</sup> Later on, Jains built on these foot-prints a Wheel which was several miles in height and in width. Still later, Bahubali or Gomateshvara, the son of Rshabhanatha ruled at Taxila for several years.<sup>20</sup>

It is a historical fact that Buddha himself never visited this part of the country. However, later on, as Taxila became a great centre of Buddhist learning and activities, the area became a veritable holy land of Buddhist religion. Many stories were invented to show Buddha's association with Taxila both in his erstwhile and historical lives. Many Jataka tales allude to these connections.<sup>21</sup> For example, it is said that

13. Buddha Parkash. *op. cit.*, p. 141.

14. *Ramayana*, VIII, 101, v. v. 10-16.

15. *Mahabharata*, Adiparva, III. 20. Also see *Sibt-e-Hasan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 103 and 133.

16. Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, pp. 133, 144.

17. Mehta, Ratilal N., *op. cit.*, p. 303. For details of these 18 arts, see *Sibt-e-Hasan*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

18. Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

19. For references, see Sir John Marshal, *Taxila* (Cambridge, 1951), Vol. I, p. 11.

20. Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prashad, "A Note on Some Bahubali Images from North India," *East and West*, N. S. Vol. 23, Nos. 3-4, 1973), p. 347.

21. For references of Taxila in *Jataka Tales* see various stories in "Jataka" (Six  
[Contd. on page 4

Buddha in one of his previous lives as P'usa or Prabhachandara (Moon-faced) was born in this city and here he offered his head to a hungry lion. Similarly, in form of King Dipankara, he ruled at Taxila and after him twelve of his sons and grandsons ruled their great kingdom from Taxila.<sup>22</sup>

### The Real History of the City

Only till recently it was believed, on good grounds though, that all this is fiction and that the history of Taxila does not go beyond 5th-6th century B.C. Recent archaeological excavations, however, have revealed that the history of Taxila goes as back as 3100 B.C. when the people of this city were in the neolithic stage of their cultural history. Later on, it was occupied by people who practised the Kotdijian culture (2800-2400 B.C.). Still later the Aryans, who had recently arrived in this area (1000 B.C.—) built two cemeteries here.<sup>23</sup> The later history is too well-known to be narrated here at length.<sup>24</sup> Suffice here to say that from 558 B.C. till 456 A.C., Taxila, though a great commercial, artistic and educational centre, was constantly under the heels of foreign rulers; Achaemenians, Macedonians, Mauryans,<sup>25</sup> Bactrian Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans, Sassanians, Kidara Kushans, and finally the White Huns—all used Taxila as hub for their political expansion. The empire of Taxila, which once included the land between the Indus and the Jhelum down to Trimmu and up in the Hazara hills, was finally shatt-

*Contd. from page 3]*

Volumes edited by V. Fousboll, published in London from 1877 to 1897; E.B. Cowell, *Jataka* (translated from Fousboll's *Jataka*), Cambridge, 1895-1913; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jataka Tales*, *op. cit.*; J.S. Speyer, *The Gatakamala or Garland of Birth Stories*, in *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by E. Max Muller (London, 1895), and Ratilal N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, *loc. cit.*

22. Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, I, p. 192.

23. For Neolithic, Kot Dijian and Aryan periods of Taxila, see the results of recent excavations: M.A. Halim, 'Sarai Khola Excavations', *Pakistan Archaeology* No. 7, 1970-7, pp. 23-89 and *Ibid.*, No. 8, 1972, pp. 1-112.

24. For history of later period see Sir John Marshall, *Taxila*, (Cambridge, 1951), Vol. I, Chap. 2; Historical, pp. 11-86.

25. In an age when spirit of nationalism in the modern sense was not born even in the embryo, the Mauryans, ruling from Patliputra, were considered as much foreigners as were Bactrians from Bactria and the Kabul valley or Scythians from Sakadvipa (Sindh). This is, perhaps, the reason to why a great number of rebellions broke at Taxila during Mauriyan rule. Historians, however, have garbed them as rebellions on account of harsh rule of the Mauryans. For details of three rebellions at Taxila see Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-212.

ered to pieces by the White Huns. The city of Taxila was also burnt down. It was never the same again. When Hieun Tsang, the Chinese traveller visited Taxila in the 7th Century (629-645 A.C.), he found Taxila a small town and a dependency of Kashmir.<sup>26</sup> Its glory was passing into oblivion. In 1026 A.C. when Al-Beruni passed with Mahmood of Ghazni through this region, the city still retained its ancient name but at the same time a new name Marikala (Margala of present day) was coming up.<sup>27</sup> In Babur's *Memoirs* and in *Ain-i-Akbari*,<sup>28</sup> the name Kacha Kot is mentioned in place of Taxila. The name Margala has also been mentioned in an inscription of Aurangzeb's period (1658-1707 A.C.) fixed in Margala Pass near Taxila.<sup>29</sup> After this period, we do not hear about Taxila any more. Even the location was lost and nobody knew where exactly this most glamorous city of the past used to exist. In the 3rd quarter of the 19th century Sir Alexander Cunningham once again brought Taxila to the focus of the learned world by identifying the remains near Shah-dheri, some 21 miles north-west of Rawalpindi, with the city of ancient Taxila.<sup>30</sup> Since then, prolonged excavations and discovery of two inscriptions<sup>31</sup> bearing the name of this city have confirmed Cunningham's identification.

#### Meaning and Origin of the Name Taxila

According to some Buddhist traditions, in some very ancient times, and in this place, was a city known as Bhadrasila.<sup>32</sup> When it was destroyed, a new city was built in its place which was then named as Takshasila. Where was Bhadrasila situated? When was it exactly founded and when precisely it was destroyed? It is difficult to say anything positively. In the whole history of Taxila we meet only one Bhadra, i.e., Bhadrakala, husband of Chandrabi,<sup>33</sup> who lived at Taxila during the reign of

26. Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, I, p. 240.

27. Sachau, Dr Edward C., *Al-Beruni's India*, Vol. I (London, 1910), p. 302.

28. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 116.

29. Rashid, Col. K. A., *Margala Inscription in his Historical Dissertations* (Karachi, XX), pp. . Also see Blochmann, in *JASB*, Vol. XL, IC, 1871. *Rehatesk in Indian Antiquities*, Vol. III, p. 205 (1874), and Yazdani, *Epigraphica Indo-Muslimica*, 1933/340, p. 21.

30. For Cunningham's identification see his *Archaeological Survey Reports*, II, pp. 111-135, V; pp. 66-74 and XIV, pp. 7-24.

31. The first inscription was discovered in 1855 (Cunningham, *Survey Report*, II, pp. (124-125), and second was discovered by Marshall. (*Taxila*, I, p. 256).

32. Mitra, Rajendralal, *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, p. 310, Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 241. I have, so far, not come across any other reference to the name Bhadrasila.

33. Marshall, *Taxila*, I, *op. cit.*, I, 5 and 327.

Azes I. But, this inscription is dated in the 23rd regnal year of Azes I. If Bhadrasila really ever existed in place of Taxila, it must date earlier than 324 B.C., i.e., on the eve of invasion of the Alexander the Great. At this time the name Taxila was already well established. Taxila was then regarded as greatest of all the cities between Indus and Jhelum.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Bhadrasila should not be looked for at Bhir Mound because with all probability, though according to some definitely, Taxila of Alexander's days was situated at this place. Moreover, we meet this name in the Vedas, Ramayana and Mahabharata. It clearly shows that the name Taxila or Takshasila is much interior to the 4th century B.C. As such, if the Nepalese tradition is correct and there really once existed the city of Bhadrasila, in the whole Taxila valley there is only one other place where this city could have existed. It is the site of Sarai Khola some 2½ kilometers south-west of Bhir Mound. Visible from the Grand Trunk Road near Sarai Kala, the site prominently occupies a bend of Kalapani Nullah. The site was discovered by the author and Mr. M. Sharif of the Department of Archaeology in 1968 and since then has been extensively excavated.<sup>35</sup> The discoveries made at this site have pushed back the history of Taxila for at least another three millennia, i.e., from the later part of 4th millennium B.C. down to 1000 B.C. and follows. The history of the site known as Bhir Mound, on the other hand, begins sometimes in the middle of 6th century B.C.<sup>36</sup> Naturally, the city at Sarai Khola preceded the same city at Bhir Mound and, Bhadrasila, if it really ever existed, must be identified with Sarai Khola site. Then, if we accept the reference of Takshasila in Vedas as contemporaneous with the advent of Aryans in Pakistan or a little later, then the possibility is that the city of Bhadrasila was destroyed by the Aryans<sup>37</sup> or was already

34. Arrian, *Anabasis*, V. 8. 2. and V. 3.6.

35. For description of this site and results of many season's excavations see M. A. Halim, *loc. cit.*

36. Three attempts have been made to probe the earliest levels of the site of Bhir Mound: Sir John Marshall excavated in 1912-13. (*Taxila, op. cit.*, I, pp. 3, 12-14 and Chap. 3 (*Bhir Mound*, pp. 87-111); Sir Mortimer Wheeler dug in 1944 (Proper report has never been published. Resume was published in his *Early India and Pakistan*, London, XX.

Finally, M. Sharif, excavated in 1968 (*Pakistan Archaeology*, No. 6, 1969, pp. 4-99). There has never been found a conclusive evidence as to when and by whom the city at Bhir Mound was founded. On the negative side we can say that there is nothing in this site that goes beyond the middle of 6th century B. C., i.e., the Persian occupation of this region.

37. The city could have equally been destroyed by the earlier wave of Scythians who,  
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#### ANTIQUITY, MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME TAKSHASILA OR TAXILA

deserted (for reasons unknown) before their arrival and when it was refounded on the same sites, it was rechristened by them as Takkashila or Takshasila. In this way the name Taxila can go as far back as 1500—to 1000 B.C.

Now we know that the city of Taxila was built at four different places in the Taxila valley at five different times—last time it occupied the same place where it first took its birth in 3100 B.C. These are :

- |            |              |                |                                           |
|------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Taxila I   | (Bhadrasila) | at Sarai Khola | 3100-1000 B.C.                            |
|            |              |                | and follows.                              |
| Taxila II  | (Takshasila) | at Bhir Mound  | 558-190 B.C.                              |
| Taxila III | (Takshasila) | at Sirkap      | 190 B.C.—60 A.C.                          |
| Taxila IV  | (Takshasila) | at Sirsukh     | 60 A.C.—456 A.C.                          |
| Taxila V   | (Takshasila) | or Marikala)   | at Sarai Khola 7th Cent. A.C. as follows. |

In historical periods, the city has been known by the name of Taxila or by its different variants, such as Takkasila, Takshasila, Takhasila or Takshaksila.<sup>38</sup> In Medieval periods it was also known as Marikala,<sup>39</sup> Babarkhana or Babarkan<sup>40</sup> and Kacha Kot.<sup>41</sup> The name Takkasila or Takhasila has been variously interpreted. Apparently, the oldest tradition is that the city was founded by Bharta, the younger brother of Sri Ramchandrar, who made one of his sons Taksha the ruler of this city.<sup>42</sup> As Sila in Sanskrit means city, the city of Taksha started being called as Takshakasila, i.e., the city of Taksha.

According to Cunningham's researches Takkas were a Naga tribe,<sup>43</sup> and according to others, legendary Takshaka was a Naga King.<sup>44</sup> Thus

*Contd. from page 6]*

according to new researches had settled in the Punjab as early as 9th cent. B. C. (Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 116, ff.) A. J. Toynebe has gone to the extent that war-like communities of the Indus valley who gave a stern encounter to Alexander in 327-324 B. C. were actually descendants of Eurasian nomads, who had been deposited there by a more recent Volkerwanderung than that of the Aryas (A. J. Toynebee, *A Study of History*, Vol. V, p. 274). If so the two periods graves at Sarai Khola should belong to Scythians rather than Aryans.

38. See below p. 8, ff.

39. Sachau, C., *loc. cit.*

40. *Ibid.*, p. 206; for identification of Babar Khana with Taxila see Sir Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India* (London, 1871), p. 110.

41. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 4 and 116.

42. *Ramayana*, VIII. v. v. 10-16.

43. Cunningham, *Survey Report*, II, pp. 6-11.

44. See M'Crindle, Keith & Marshall below.

either Takshka got his name from his tribe or the tribe got its name from its leader. Now Takshaka is very close to Takshan. Takka may be a briefer version of Takshan or Takshaka. There are some strong evidences to show that Takkas or Takshan was the real founder of this city. Mc'Crindle,<sup>45</sup> A. B. Keith<sup>46</sup> and Marshall<sup>47</sup> are of the opinion that Sila also means a hillock or a rock. According to them the area around the city was once ruled by the Naga King Takshaka who had his abode on one of the rocks of the area named Nshada<sup>48</sup> and after him it was known as Takshakasila or the Rock of Takshaka. I identify the high mountain of Nshada with the Sarda hill in the Taxila valley. This hill across the Haro river, is the highest in the valley and is situated north of Taxila city. According to others, Takka was actually a powerful Naga tribe who once ruled the territory between the rivers Attock (Indus) and Chenab from their headquarters at the city which was named after the tribe as Takshakasila or the city of the Takka tribe. Cunningham is sure about it.<sup>49</sup> According to him the Takka people were of Turanian origin,<sup>50</sup> but they were expelled from the Sindh Sagar Doab before the arrival of Alexander the Great. This expulsion must have taken place long before the 4th cent. B.C. when Naga tribes, on account of having become assertive, were quelled by the famous Pandu King of Taxila Janamejaya.<sup>51</sup> Thomas Watters<sup>52</sup> identifies Takkas with Che-Ka of

45. Mc'Crindle, J. W., *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as described by Arrian Q. Curtius Diodorus, Plutarch & Justice* (Westminster, 1896), pp. 342-343, Note. I: Taxila.

46. Keith A. B. and A. N. Macdonnell, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects* (Rep. Delhi, 1967), I. p. 296, V. V. Takshaka Vaisaliya.

47. Marshall, Sir John, *Taxila, op. cit.*, I, p. 1, n. 1.

48. Sachau, Dr. E. C., *Al-Beruni's India, op. cit.*, I, p. 231, 247 and II, p. 120.

49. Cunningham, Sir Alexander, *Archaeological Survey of India. Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65. Vol. II* (Rep. Varanasi, 1972), pp. 6-11. Cunningham opines that the now deserted city of Attock on the left bank of the Indus, was also founded by Takka tribe. As a matter of fact the name 'ATTOCK' for this city does not go beyond the period of Akbar the Great (1556-1606). But Cunningham (*Ibid.*) opines that TAHORA of Peutinger's Tables (situated west of Alexandria Boucephalia) is same as Attock. Rashiduddin, the historian, mentions it under the name: TANKOR, or AT-TANKOR. According to Cunningham Tankor changed into Attack.

50. Cunningham, *loc. cit.*, In Turanian mythology the serpent (Naga) is regarded as a symbol of the highest deity. See Buddha Parkash, *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab, op. cit.*, p. 47.

51. Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 133. Also see *Supra*, p. 3.

52. Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-291. Also, *JRAS*, XX, p. 343.

#### ANTIQUITY, MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME TAKSHASILA OR TAXILA

Hiuen Tsang, but at the same time, places them somewhere between Gandhara and Lampa, i.e., outside the territory of present day Pakistan. It is possible that after their expulsion from Sind Sagar Doab the Naga tribe of Takkas dispersed and retired into far off places. But they were not extirpated from Taxila valley completely. Legends point to the existence of race of Nagas and their habitat, i.e., Patala-loka or Patalene of the Greek writers, where the Nagas might have gone after their expulsion from Taxila.<sup>53</sup> In Kalhane's *Rajatrangani*, there is a mention of Takka people (*Rajat.* VII. 474), Takka-desa (*Rajat.* VII. 159) and Takka-Visaya (*Rajat.* VIII. 1091)<sup>54</sup> in connection with events taking place in Kashmir between 883-1128 A.C. During the-reign of king Harsha, certain Takkas are mentioned by their names such as: Valliya Takka, Laksmidara Takka and Lavaraja Takka of Takka-Visaya.<sup>55</sup> Thus it becomes clear that atleast in Kashmir Takka was as ethnic group of people and the term Takka-desa or Takka-Visaya was applied to the land occupied by them. There is no identity of views as to where was the Takka-Visaya. I am inclined to think that Tikka-Visaya is only another and late form of Takka-sila. Takkasila (Taxila) was a name applied both to the city and to the country that once extended from the Indus in the west, to the Jhelum in the east, and to the Trimmu-head in the south. This view gets corroboration from Cunningham, according to whom Takka-desa or Takka-Visaya are synonymous with the Punjab extending from the Indus in the west to Beas in the last and to the confluence of the Five Rivers below Multan in the south.<sup>56</sup> He further identifies Takka-desa with Tsehkia (local equivalent Taki) of Hiuen Tsang which the latter visited in the 7th century. The capital of Tseh-Kia was She-Kie which has been identified as Sakala or Sialkot.<sup>57</sup> Aurel Stein<sup>58</sup> and Cunningham<sup>59</sup> both agree in identifying Takkas with Madras or Bahikas of *Mahabhart*a—both being the ancient inhabitants of the Punjab. In the lexicon of Hemacandra also, the Bahikas are said to be the same as Takkas (*Bahikash takka-namano*).<sup>60</sup>

53. Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-49.

54. Stein, M. A., *Kalhanas Chronicles of the Kings of Kashmir* (Westminster, 1900), I, pp. 205, 301; II, p. 86.

55. *Rajatrangini*, VIII, pp. 520, 1001, 1064 and 1207 and VIII, 1091 (f. n.).

56. Cunningham, A., *Ancient Geography of India* (London, 1871), pp. 148-154.

57. Stein, M.A., *op. cit.*, I, p. 205, f. n. 150. Prof. Dr Goeja (Bibl. Geograph. Arabi-corum) identifies Takkas as Attock River and Takka-desa as Shardo. Cf. Stein, *loc. cit.*

58. Stein, *op. cit.*, I, p. 205.

59. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography, op. cit.*, pp. 148-154.

60. Cf. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Cunningham has further tried to identify et-Takin territory of Masudi (915 A.C.), Tafak of Suleman (851 A.C.), Taffa of Ibn Khurdabha (912 A.C.), Taifand of Kazwini (1023 A.C.), Takisher of Alberuni (1023 A.C.), Taban of M. Rainaud, etc., with Takka-desa which he regards as Punjab, with Takkawar, and Tahora of Pautingir's Tables, as capital of the Punjab.<sup>61</sup> In the 7th cent. A.C., kingdom of Taki or Punjab was divided into three provinces—Taki proper in the north, Multan in the south and Shorkot in the middle.<sup>62</sup> The Taki province consisted of Bhera, Boucephalia, Mikala, Gujrat, Sakala, Asarar, Lahore, etc.,<sup>63</sup> almost corresponding to the kingdom of Takasila in ancient times—Taxila city notwithstanding having been reduced to a very insignificant status at that time.

All this clearly shows that Takkas were the inhabitant of the ancient Punjab with their seat in the northern Punjab, probably at Taxila. From here they spread or dispersed in all directions till in the 7th century the entire Punjab was under their heels. In the 9th century and afterwards they had been reduced to an insignificant position but the old memories never left them. As late as the late 19th century, they were regarded as an agricultural race living in the lower hills between the Jhelum and Ravi.<sup>64</sup> The greatest remnant of this tribe in the Punjab is the old Nagari script which was called Takari as well as Mundi and Lundi.<sup>65</sup>

It has been mentioned that Takkas were Naga people. There is nothing improbable in it. According to the *Satapatha Brahmana* (XIII. 4.3), Nagas were old people with scripture or tradition of their own. They were named as such because of the serpent being their symbol.<sup>66</sup> Naga cult is very very old in Pakistan. Its existence is testified by the presence of terra-cotta figurines in the form of serpent-legged deities and representation of serpent deities on sherds and pots as discovered from Gumla, Kot Diji, Rahman Dheri, Jhang Batar, etc., of about 4th-3rd Millennia B. C.<sup>67</sup> It is also known from the cities of Harappan civilisation.<sup>68</sup>

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-151.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Sastri, A. Banerji, *The Nagas*, Annals of the Bhandeakar Oriental Research Institute, Vol. XVIII, pp. 338-350.

67. Dani, Dr. A. H., *Ancient Pakistan*, Vol. A-1970-71, pp. 65-68; Dr. F. A. Khan, *Pakistan Archaeology*, No. .... Information regarding Rahman Dheri and Jhang Batar is based on personal observations. Reports are yet to be published.

68. Buddha Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

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There is a mention of Snake worship in *Atharva-veda* (V. 13. 6-8) and in *Rigveda*. Buddha Parkash<sup>69</sup> has traced deep rooted similarities of serpent symbology among the un-Aryan people of Pakistan and India on the one hand and the people of Middle East—Turanians, Kurds, Akkadians, Chaldeans, Persians, etc. This strengthens the view “of their having belonged to a common social and cultural stock.” These Nagas soon obtained sufficient power and became assertive. As we are informed in the celebrated *Sarpa Sastra*, they were defeated by King Janamejaya who held his courts at Takshasila.<sup>70</sup>

Taxila has always been regarded as a strong centre of Naga worship and was ruled by a Naga King.<sup>71</sup> But it is strange that, although Naga King and his Queen appear very prominently and frequently on the reliefs of Gandhara Art and that Naga King is believed to be living in or near Taxila,<sup>72</sup> Naga figures are least popular amongst the statuary of Taxila.<sup>73</sup>

Some Chinese travellers tried to provide a religious background to the name of Takshasila. Fa-Hien, a Chinese traveller who visited Taxila in 400 A. C., mentions the city under the name of Chou-Cha-Shi-Lo and gives its meaning as “Cut-off-Head.”<sup>74</sup> Hieun Tsang<sup>75</sup> mentions the name of city as Ta-Cha-Shi-Lo which has approximately the same meaning. It appears that due to some difficulty of phonetics the Chinese travellers heard Sila (city) as Sira (head) and thus the original Takkasira sounded to them as Takkasira and this they transcribed into Chinese. Since in local language Tak or Takna (more precisely Tuk or Tukna) also means to cut, Tuksira or Takkasira meant to the pious Buddhist Chinese sounded as “Cut-off Head.” Fa-Hien interpreted this name with the help of a Buddhist Jataka. According to him Buddha in one of his erstwhile lives was born at Taxila as Pusa or Chandraprabha (Moon-faced). In his youth, as an act of charity, he fed a hungry lion (or according to some other traditions it was Brahman Devadatta—his arch enemy). So the locality where

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

71. Cunningham places the abode of Naga King at Hasan Abdal, some 15 kilometers north-west of Taxila. See Cunningham, Report, II. p. 138.

72. Sachau, Dr. E. C., *op. cit.*

73. During 21 years excavations, only one fragment of stone sculpture representing the Hyma of the Naga Kalika has been discovered at Taxila. See Marshall. *Taxila*, II. p. 708, No. 69.

74. Quoted by Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, I. pp. 240-241.

75. Thomas Watters, *loc. cit.*

Buddha cut-off his head was christened as Takkasira or "Cut-off Head." Cunningham<sup>76</sup> believes that the Jandial Stupa (later proved to be a Greek Temple) is the place where Buddha cut-off his throat. Marshall,<sup>77</sup> on the other hand, opines that this Sirshadanam or Sirdan (the Head-sacrifice) took place at the site of Bhallar Stupa in the Taxila Valley.

It appears that this tradition of 'cut-off head' became so popular during the Buddhist supremacy at Taxila that no subsequent period could ever shake it off. It persists, though in a different form, even during the Muslim period. The area in front of Taxila-III, or present day Sirkap, was known in the 19th century as Babar-khana or the House of Tiger.<sup>78</sup> In Al-beruni's *Indica*<sup>79</sup> there is a reference to a Babrhan or Babarkan, situated midway between the Indus and the Jhelum from where takes off the route to Kashmir. This, according to Cunningham, must be identified with Babar-khana on the north of Sirkap. The name Babar-khana or Tiger's House also alludes to the same place in Sirshadanam story where Buddha offered his head to a lion. Similarly, in the city of Taxila, there is a hill range on the south of the Taxila Valley, which even today is known as Margala. Among other meanings assigned to this name, Margala also means 'cut-throat,' i.e., *Mar* -to cut, *Gala*-throat. Here, the cutting-off head is transformed into 'Cutting-off throat' and hence Margala and Takkasira connote the same meaning. The oldest references to Margala is in Abu Raihan Al-Beruni's *Indica* where he gives Margala (his Marikala) as an alternate name of 'Takshasila'.<sup>80</sup> Later on, the name 'Margala' recurs in an inscription dated 1084 A.H./1672 A.C. of Aurangzeb period which is fixed on a roadside about two kilometers from Sarai Kholā.<sup>81</sup> The name persists even today.

The tradition of 'cut-off-head' is also preserved in the form of Sirkap—modern name of Taxila-III, which also means 'cut-off head,' though usually a different story is alluded to this name.<sup>82</sup>

76. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 112-113 and p. 117.

77. Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila* (Cambridge, 1960).

78. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 116; Cunningham, *Survey Report*, XIV, pp. 8-9 and Thomas Watters, *op. cit.*, I. p. 241.

79. Sachau, Dr. E. C., *op. cit.*, I. p. 302.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 302.

81. See *Supra*, p. 5, f.n. 26.

82. This story revolves round Raja Rasalu, son of Raja Salivahna of Sialkot, and three Rakshsa brothers (Sirkap, Sirsukh and Ambha), and their four sisters (Kapi, Kalpi, Munda and Mundehi) and how he eliminated all of them. According to one legend, Raja Rasalu once bid with Sirkap and it was settled that

[Contd. on page 13]

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Some scholars have tried to find meaning of the word Takshasila in accordance with the results of excavation conducted on the site. According to them the name Takshasila was given to this city on account of building material universally in vogue here in all the ages. Sila also means stone and Tak or Tuk mean "to cut", "to dress" or "to give shape." Since the entire city of Takshasila, and other religious monuments around it, have been built up with dressed stones, accordingly the city was named or it got as its name Takshasila, i.e., "a city built of cut stones" or "a city built of dressed stones."<sup>83</sup> This view is substantiated from other sources too. From Taxila-III (Sirkap) was discovered an Aramaic inscription of Ashoka's period (3rd cent. B.C.) wherein the name of the city has been given as "Naggarud," i.e., "Carpentry."<sup>84</sup> According to some scholars Naggarud is the Aramaic version of Takasila. It appears to be quite sound. Taksha or Takshan are the old forms of the word "Tarkhan," i.e.,

*Contd. from page 12]*

one who looses will have to behead other's head. Rasalu won, but instead of *Sir-Kapna* or beheading his opponent, he accepted Sirkap's daughter Kokila in his marriage.

- The legend of Raja Rasalu is very common through-out the Punjab. Many sites are associated with it, though Cunningham regards it essentially as belonging to Pothohar area where Taxila is situated. For details see *Infrad*, p. 18, f. n. 1. Also see *Survey-Report*, II. pp. 153 and 205, f.n. and Marshall, *Taxila*, I, p. 112.
83. *Taxila*, I. p. 1. fn. 1. Parenthetically, I may mention here that outside Pakistan too, we find cities having names with similar meanings. Thus we know that the famous Central Asian City of Tashkand also means "the Stone (E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, op. cit., I. p. 298) or "Stone Tower on the road of the Caravans between India and Serica," as Ptolemy prefers to call it. (Ptolemy's *Geographia*, as quoted by Alberuni in Sachau, loc. cit, and elaborated by Thomas Watters, op. cit., I. p. 86.) In Turkish language, Tash means 'a piece of stone 'or a' city built of stone. Al-Beruni has given Tashkand the same meanings. It has generally been accepted that Hieun Tsang's Che-Shih is Tashkand of present day and many scholars have given Che-Shih the same meaning as above (St. Martin, and Dr. Bretschneider quoted by Thomas Watters (op. cit., pp. 86-87. Thomas Watters contends that there is nothing in the city or locality to vouchsafe these meanings because all houses of Taskand are built of mud. Only mosques and other buildings are made of second-hand stones. According to him, Che-Shih is only a proper name of one of the members of the Ge-Ti or Yue-Chi family who once ruled Tashkand. Similarly, near Phocaia in Turkey, an 8th cent. B.C. Tomb is still named as Tash-Kule or a Fort built of stones and another site is known as Tash Surat (George E. Beans, *Aegean Turkey*, London, 1966, pp. 53-54, 124-125.
84. Cf. C. Andreas in, *Taxila*, I. p. 1, fn. 1, and *Ibid.*, p. 165.

carpenter.<sup>85</sup> In Tibetan language the name of this city has been mentioned as rdha-hjog.<sup>86</sup> It also mean "cut-stone" or "dressed-stone." One Chinese author transcribed the name as "Sio-Shih "meaning thereby," a cut-off rock."<sup>87</sup> Another Chinese author gives a slightly different version, i.e., Tsio-shih, i.e., "carved rock,"<sup>88</sup> Tsio-Shih is sometimes also taken to mean as the "Rock of the Takka Tribe."

These inscriptional and literary references carry enough weight. According to them Taxila means "city of dressed stones" or "a city of Takshana (Tarkhana), i.e., Carpenters." Perhaps, a few people knew that even today Taxila is renowned throughout the country for the capability of its inhabitants for cutting, dressing, carving, and sculpturing stones. It is also a fact that even today the cutting and dressing of stones, carpentry and smith works are done by one and the same group of people living in the area around Taxila. Though all scholars regard Takkas to be Kshatri; there is a possibility that by profession they were Takshan or Tarkhan and that somehow or other these Takkas assumed supreme power in the territory. Now the idea of Vaishyas ruling a territory may not be palatable to some scholars. But, it should be kept in mind that this region has always been like a big mixing bowl where races, men and ideas soon loose their identity. Pathans are a good example of this process. There are also historical evidences that the families of menial origin were ruling big empires in Pakistan and India. Mauryan dynasty is one glaring example of this. They succeeded Takkas at Taxila.

The local Taxilans even today pronounce the name of the city as Tas-Kala. It is quite probable that Taskala of the local people is actually a changed form of Tashkala of the Turkish language. The latter well reminds us the Turkish inhabitants who occupied and ruled this city and area around it at different times. These are Scythians (1st Cent. B.C.), Kushans (1st to 3rd cent. A.C.), Turk Shahi (8th to 11th cent. A.C.) and finally, the Mughals (16th to 18th cent. A.C.). All of them had ori-

85. Macdonnel, N. A. and Keith, A. B., *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, op. cit., I, p. 297 (i) v. v. Takshan. Also *Ibid.*, II, pp. 69-70. v. v. Brbu. In *Sthapatha Brahmana* there is a mention of one teacher named Takshan, whose some 'formula' was not accepted by the King named Jivala. See *Vedic Index*, op. cit., I, p. 297. Brunhoffer (*Iran and Ter*, xx : xx, pp. 127, quoted in *Vedic Index*, op. cit., II, p. 707), tried to identify a tribe TA KOI with Takshan of the Vedas. But Macdonel and Keith (*Vedic Index*, loc. cit.) have outrightly rejected the idea.

86. *Taxila*, I, p. 7, f. n. 1.

87. *Fo-pen-hsing-chi-ching*, ch: 38 as quoted by Thomas Watters, op. cit., I, p. 241.

88. *A-yo-wang-chung*, ch. I, as quoted by Thomas Watters, loc. cit.



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ginally migrated from Central Asia and were Turkish in origin.<sup>89</sup> It is quite possible that some of these tribes might have transcribed Takshasila into Tash-kala or Teskala in order to sound more meaningful to the Turkish speaking people. If so, the name Babar Khana, as mentioned above, can also be alluded to them because it is also of Turkish origin and its mention by Al-Beruni proves its antiquity.

Whatever the meaning and the origin of the name Takshasila may be, there is no doubt it was already a famous name in 325 B. C. When Alexander visited this city. The Greek historians have given the name of the city as Taxila. According to them Taxila was the greatest city of cities of whole India and Pakistan known to them.<sup>90</sup> Pliny<sup>91</sup> spells the name as Taxilla, whereas Ptolemy<sup>92</sup> writes the form Taxilala which appears to be only copying mistakes. Diodorus,<sup>93</sup> Curtius,<sup>94</sup> Isidorus Characene,<sup>95</sup> Plutarch,<sup>96</sup> Philostratos<sup>97</sup> the anonymous author of the *Periplus* of the Erythrean Sea<sup>98</sup> and many other Greek and Latin writers mentioned the name of the city as Taxila. This name had passed into the whole western literature unchanged till even today. The name Taxila is actually a Greek version of Tak-sila or Takkasila and not of Takshasila or Takhasila. The Greek historians called it "Ta Taxila"<sup>99</sup>—Ta' being the neutral plural gender, meaning thereby that for the Greeks Tak-sila meant a city of Taka people, and Taxiles as the ruler of the city of Takka Tribe.

All Greek historian agree that at the time of Alexander's invasion the ruler of Taxila was Raja Ambhi (also mentioned as Memphi, Amphi, or Omphi with title 'Taxiles.' Plutarch<sup>100</sup> and Strabo<sup>101</sup> mention him

89. Saifur Rahman Dar, *Hellenistic Elements in the Architecture of Taxila*. (In Greek), Salonica, 1973, pp. 24-25.

90. Starbo, *Geography*, XV. 1-28, Arrian, *Anabasis*, V. 8. 2 and v. 3-6.

91. Pliny, *Natural Historiae*, V. I: xxi. 2.

92. Ptolemy, *Geographia*, ed. by C.F.A. Nobbe, Lipsiae, 1887, Vol. II.

93. *Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica* (Loeb Classica Library, 1963), XVII. 86.

94. Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Historia Alexandri Magni*, (L.C.L., 1956), VIII. 12.

95. Isidorus of Characene, *Parthian Stations*, in *Geographi Graeci Minores*, I, (Paris, 1882).

96. Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, (L. C. L., 1949), VII.

97. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (L.C.L., 1960).

98. Anonymous : *Eriplus of the Erythrean Sea*.

99. See the Greek title of my book "*Ta Hellenistica Stoicheia Sten Architektonike-tan Taxilon*", published in 1973 by the Society of Macedonian Studies, Salonica, Greece. 'TON' is actually a genetive form of the article 'TA',

100. Plutarch, *loc. cit.*

101. Strabo., *loc. cit.*,

only by his title Taxiles. Curtius,<sup>102</sup> however, clarifies that Taxiles is indeed a dynastic title. He writes :

“Omphis, under Alexander’s permission and according to the usage of the realm, assumed the ensigns of royalty along with the name which his father had borne. His people called him Taxiles, *for such was the name which accompanied the sovereignty, on whomsoever it devolved.*”

The father of Ambhi has been mentioned only by his title ‘Taxiles’ and Ambhi assumed the title of his father only when he sat on the throne.<sup>103</sup> It is generally believed that ‘Taxiles’ was a title rather than proper name of Ambi’s father and Curtius’ statement supports this view. But there is no definite proof of this assumption. If Taxiles was only a title why all Greek historians have failed to mention his real name. Is it not possible that Taxiles was his proper name and after him his successors assumed this as a dynastic name ?

According to some other scholars, Taxiles was a regional title while a few others maintain that the title was a dynastic one.<sup>104</sup> Myself, I believe in its being a dynastic rather than a regional title. The first known historical king of Taxila has been mentioned by the name Taxiles, whereas in case of Ambhi it has been clearly stated that Taxiles was his title. In the case of his father, there is no hint to suggest that ‘Taxiles’ was only a title. Instead, all Greek, historians mention it as a proper name. Ambhi was probably the first and the last scion of this family to adopt this dynastic title. Even if Taxiles was the title of Ambhi’s father, as was in case of Ambhi himself and not his proper name, there is no ground to say that Taxiles was a regional title.<sup>105</sup> It has already been pointed out that the city (Taxila) might have derived its name from the Naga tribe Takka or even from the name of the legendary Naga King Takshaka—hence Takkasila or Takshakasila.<sup>106</sup> Now it can be objected that Takshaka is purely a legendary being. It might or might not have any historical existence. But even if we confine ourselves to historical

102. Curtius, VIII. 12.

103. Diodours, *op. cit.*, VII. 86.

104. McCrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 273., f. n. 2, pp. 412-13.

105. The kingdom of Taxila survived ‘Ambhi’ for centuries to come. Had ‘Taxiles’ been a regional title all or at least some other rulers of the kingdom of Taxila might have carried the same title. But its discontinuation of the title after Ambhi clearly proves that the title was a patronymic and as the Takka family could never regain its power, the title was never reused by any other ruler of the city.

106. *Supra*,

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period, the conclusion, remain to be the same, that is :

- (i) Takka was a tribe living in the neighbourhood of Taxila;
- (ii) Taxiles was a patronymic of the ruler or the city known as Taxila at least at the time of Alexander's invasion, and
- (iii) Taxila and Taxiles must have been derived only from Takka-with whatever meaning.

Now, whether the city, got the name from the tribe or the tribe got its name from the city, is difficult to say.

According to some, the name Ambhi itself is a patronymic. Thus a French scholar has tried to show that at the time of Alexander's invasion of Pakistan a Kshatri tribe from Ambha race was ruling at Taxile.<sup>107</sup> The famous Raja Ambhi got his name from this tribe. The name Omphis (as mentioned by the Greek historians) is identical with Ambhi, mentioned in a Gonapatha of Panini, and recalls the Ambhijas, who represented a school of political thought, according to the *Artha-shastra* of Kautilya.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps Opiat of Hecataeus also represent the same tribe.<sup>109</sup> This can be accepted only if we believe that Ambhi and his family also belong to Takka tribe, as Kshatri group of people, and if M.S. Levi is to be believed, Ambhi may be one of its many sub-tribes. Only from the Takka tribes, the city could have been named as Takka-sila and its ruler as Taxlavi (belonging to Taxila)<sup>110</sup> which the Greeks transcribed into Taxiles. Taxlavi or Taxiles, therefore, can equally mean a ruler of Takka Tribe,<sup>111</sup> a ruler of the city of Takkas (Taxila) or a

107. M. Sylvain Levi 'Notes sur l'nde a l'epoqued' Alexander', *Journal Asiatique*, (1890), I. pp. 234-236 & 239. Also see Budha Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 152 and J. W. McCrindle, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-413. According to a very popular Punjabi legend Ambha was the name of one the three Raksha brothers (Sirkap, Sirukh and Ambha) who were exterminated by Raja Rasalu of Sialkot. Cunningham has referred to three mounds, Taxila, Ambha and Kapi near Sheikhpura; Amakapis on the west Ravi, Pinjor on the east bank of Sutlej and Saharanpur east of Jumna as the famous locales of this legend. (Cunningham, *Survey Report*, II. pp. 156 & 205, f. n.). Also see *Supra*, p. 12, f. n. 3.

108. As quoted by Budha Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

109. *Cambridge History of India*, I. p. 354.

110. Same as Dehlavi (belonging to Delhi), Lakhnavi (belonging to Lucknow), Peshawari (belonging to Peshawar), etc.

111. At present in the whole Punjab there is no tribe with the name 'Takka.' See Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes* (Lahore, 1916). Only a few castes and sub-castes bears a faint memory of this name (such as Tokhi, a Turanian Tribe, (Ibbetson, p. 66), Khatak (Ibbetson, p. 75); Thakaria, *Ibid.*, p. 187; Khakha (*Ibid.*, pp. 239, 241), etc. However, it is difficult to co-relate these castes with Takkas of the history. Moreover, their numbers are too few to be quoted.

ruler of the Empire of Takkas.

If so, Cunningham is wrong when he says that the Takka tribe was expelled from Sindh-Sagar Doab before Alexander the Great invaded this region. Actually, Takka tribe came to a complete end after Ambhi's disappearance from the scene or after the Mauryans came in power in or about 317 B.C. Thus the Takka tribe came to an end but the name which they gave to the Empire and to the city persisted for centuries to come. Every new ruler who came to power here tried to discredit the Takka tribe for this honour and gave his own meanings to the name Takkasila or Takshakasila but for centuries to come they could not obliterate it. Dr. M. A. Chaghatai has tried to identify Taxila with Usaifan of *Futuh-ul-Buldan* of Baladuri, but with no justification.<sup>112</sup> The 'Usaifan' of Baladuri is the name of a country and not of a town. The description and location of 'Usaifan' country, however, terribly tallies with the ancient empire of Taxila, i.e., a country between Kashmir, Kabul and Multan.<sup>113</sup>

112. Chaghatai, Dr. M. A., *Taxila, Revisited* (Lahore, 1975), p. 5 (Reprinted from the *Proceedings of the History Congress*, 1973).

113. Ahmad Al-Baladuri, *Futuh-al-Buldan*, (Cairo, 1901), pp. 438-450. English Trans. *The Origins of the Islamic States* (New York, London, 1924), pp. 209-254.

## Identification of the Kekaya Metropolis Girivraja-Raj Agriha

DEVENDRA HANDA

Girivraja, the metropolis of the Kekayas<sup>1</sup> where Bharata and Śatrughna had gone to stay with former's maternal grandfather Aśvapati,<sup>2</sup> was known by the names Girivraja (the enclosure of hills, i.e., the city enclosed by hills) and Rājagriha (the abode of the kings).<sup>3</sup> There was another Rājagriha-Girivraja<sup>4</sup> in Magadha and still another in Po-ho or Balkh mentioned by Hiuen Tsang.<sup>5</sup> Being the capital city, it probably possessed all the beauties and elegances of good city and has, therefore, been called 'the beautiful, and 'the best of the cities.' It was situated at

1. Kekayas, along with the Madrakas and the Uśīnaras, were a branch of the family of Anu, son of Yayāti (*Matsya Purana*, 48, 10, 20, *Vāyu*, p. 99, 12, 23). Anus have been mentioned quite frequently as a tribe in the *Rigveda* (I.108,8; VII.18,14; VIII. 10,5) and seem to have been living in the central Panjab (*RV.*, VIII. 74,15) near the Paruṣṇī. The Vedic texts, however, do not mention the name of their capital city. The *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions the name of their metropolis and places the Kekaya territory beyond the Vipāśa and abutting on the Gandharva or Gandhāra Viśhaya (*Rām.*, II. 68, 19-22; VII. 113, 14), Arrian places the 'Kekians' on the river Saranges, apparently a tributary of the Ravi (*Indica*, IV. *Indian Antiquary*, vol. V. p. 332; J. W. McCrindle, *India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Calcutta, 1877, pp. 163 and 196). In the *Mahabharata*, however, the Kekayas have been placed between the Sutlej and the Beas (*Mbh.*, *Bhishma Parva*, IX. 48).
2. Aśvapati was the name of Bharata's maternal grandfather as also of his maternal uncle. Aśvapati was a celebrated scholar who instructed even the Brahmanas like Aruna Aupavesi, Gautama, Mahasala, Jabala, Budila, Uddalaka Aruni, etc., (*Satapatha Brahmana*, X. 6, 1, 2; *Chhandogya Upanishad*, V. 11, 4; S. Radha krishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, p. 435.) Uddalaka was a contemporary of the famous philosopher king Janaka of Videha as mentioned in the Vedic texts. Since Aruna Aupavesi belonged to an older generation than Uddalaka, Aśvapati must be an older contemporary of the Vedic Janaka (See H. C. Raychaudari, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, pp. 56, 62).
3. उभौ भरतशत्रुघ्नौ केकयेषु परन्तपौ, पुरे राजगृहे रम्ये मातामहनिवेशने. and गिरिव्रजं पुरवरं शीघ्रमासेदुरञ्जसि — *Ram.*, II. 67, 7, and 68, 22.
4. *Sacred Books of the East Series*, vol. XIII, p. 150.
5. Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. I. p. 44.

a distance of seven days' journey by chariots from Ayodhyā.<sup>6</sup> Its exact location, however, is not known.

Cunningham has identified the ancient Girivraja with Girjhak or Jalalpur on the river Jhelum<sup>7</sup> but some scholars are inclined to locate it on the southern (left) bank of the Beas on the ground that neither the envoys who had gone to bring back Bharata from Girivraja after Daśaratha's death nor Bharata had to cross the Beas in the journey to and from Girivraja.<sup>8</sup> It is, however, notable that the text of the *Rāmāyana* does not give even the name of the Sutlej (Śutudri) explicitly as falling on the way either of the messengers or of Bharta, so we cannot say that the Kekaya country lay south of the Sutlej. In the Vedic period, and probably later also, the Kekayas inhabited the territory between the Indus and the Beas<sup>9</sup> and the *Rāmāyana* very clearly refers to the Kekaya territory extending from the Beas to the Gandhāra vishaya.<sup>10</sup> We have, therefore, to search the Kekaya capital somewhere between the Beas and the Indus and not the east of the Beas.

Girjhak or Jalalpur is situated on the west bank of the river Jhelum, nearly 40 k.m. south-west of Jhelum city, at the extreme end of the salt range where the Kandar ravine joined the old bed of the Jhelum (which now flow about 3 k.m. away). The town was most probably a very flourishing place' in the time of Akbar in whose honour it was named Jalalpur from Kerchak (Girjhak), its old Hindu name.<sup>11</sup> According to a local tradition recorded by Cunningham, Girjhak extended to a distance of 11 miles in the west-north-west as far as the old temple of Baghanwala.<sup>12</sup> Though this is only an exaggeration, yet it is beyond doubt that the city was a very large one and extended for a considerable distance to the west as that site was found to be thickly strewn over with pot sherds for about half a mile.<sup>13</sup> Its antiquity too is proved beyond doubt by the

6. The seven days' journey by chariots has been calculated to be about 650 miles (Raychaudhari, *PHAI*, p. 63) and the slow speed is attributed to the absence of good roads (Pargiter, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1908, pp. 317 ff. The calculation is a mere guess.

7. Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi, 1963 (CAGI), p. 149; *JASB*, 1835, p. 250 ff.

8. Nobin Chandra Das, *A Note on the Ancient Geography of Asia*, *JASB*, 1896, p. 25; S. N. Vyas, *India in the Ramayana Age*, Delhi, 1967, map facing p. 325.

9. F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, London, 1922, pp. 109 & 264.

10. *Rama*, II. 68, 19-22; VII. 113, 14.

11. Abul Fazl, *Ayin-i-Akbari*, Gladwyn's Translation, vol. II. p. 263.

12. *CAGI*, p. 138. 13. *Ibid*.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF THE KEKAYA METROPOLIS GIRIVRAJA-RAJ AGRIHA

discovery of coins going back to Alexander's successors and its strategic position near the confluence of the Kandar ravine with the Jhelum surrounded all around by steep hills of the salt range at the south-east end of the lower road might have probably led to its occupation at a very early period.<sup>14</sup>

The name Girjhak seems to have been derived from the the ancient name Giri-vraja (ka) found in the *Rāmāyana*. Not unlike the Magadhan Giri-vraja, its other name Rājagriha too might have remained equally popular and in the medieval times it seems to have become Rājagiri. The place might have had a citadel also, called the Rājagiri-durga, mentioned in the Gwalior inscription of Bhoj<sup>15</sup> and Prabhāvaka-charita.<sup>16</sup> Alberuni also refers to Rājagiri situated somewhere in the Punjab, north-west of Jālandhara and south of Kashmir.<sup>17</sup>

We thus see that the Kekaya metropolis cannot be placed south of the Beas and Cunningham's identification of the ancient Girivraja-Rājagriha with Girjhak on the right bank of the Jhelum is in all probability correct.

14. Cunningham regarded Jalalpur as the probable site of Alexander's camp from where he proceeded to attack the forces of Poros (Ibid., p. 135 ff; cf. A. Burnes, *Travels in Punjab and Bokhara* vol. II. p. 49; General Court, *JASB* 1836, pp. 472-3; Gen. Abbot, *JASB*, 1848, p. 619).

15. *Epigraphica Indica*, XVIII, p. 99 ff.

16. H. A. Phadke, "A Note on Rajagiridurga of the Gwalior Inscription of Bhoja," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society, Patna*, vol. XLIX. pp. 167-9.

17. Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Dehli, 1964, pp. 205 and 208.

## The Bible of the Sikhs

JOHN CLARK ARCHER\*

The Bible of the Sikhs, one volume in particular—there are several which are herein to be distinguished—is a sacred scripture worth knowing in the West. The Sikhs are, perhaps, the most conspicuous community in the present India, not by any means the largest, but the most active and compact. Several scholars from among the Sikhs themselves have been engaged of late in research among the documents with a view to their own community's instruction in the history, composition, and authentic content of the Book. The present writer, himself a western friend of Sikhs and long a student of Sikhism, is eager to transmit to Westerners, to those especially who may be concerned with comparative religion, some gleanings from the field. He offers here and now some unusual returns, together with some date generally well known, of a personal visitation under special privilege to what is said to be the original copy, or first edition, of the book. It rests in the palace-fort at Kartarpur, a town in the Jalandhar district of East Panjab, forty miles or so south-east of Amritsar, the major, central city of the Sikhs.

The problem of the book is, of course, acute, as we shall see, but we shall assume at once that what is now kept under its legal guardian in Kartarpur is indeed the first edition of the Sikhs' own sacred scriptures, whose title *Adi Granth*, "the original collection," is fully justified. To be sure, it bears no date, nor the name of any scribe. Its history is not altogether clear, nor has the authenticity of all its contents been established—if, indeed, their value can ever be proved. For example they say it was once hidden by the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, for fourteen days in the Beas river (or, perhaps, the Sutlej) to protect it from the agents of the hostile Mughal emperor, Aurangzib. But the stains that mar it seem not to be the signs of water-damage (Moses, the Israelite law-giver, lay as a babe hidden without harm among the bulrushes at the Egyptian river's edge, but we dare cite the incident as possibly having some effect on the growth of Sikh legend). At any rate, the copy at Kartarpur can be readily

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distinguished, as we shall see, from two other early *Granth*s, the one at Mangat, and the other, that of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, itself sometimes called the *Daswan*, or "tenth," *Granth*, a very influential scripture.

The *Adi Granth* of Kartarpur is a huge and heavy volume whose approximate dimensions are : a height of fifteen inches, a width of twelve, and thickness eight. It consists of 974 leaves, each numbered in the upper lefthand corner. Of the consequently 1948 pages, some are wholly blank except for a numeral, may be, and it does not immediately appear why they were left blank, for they interrupt neither the writing nor the thought, even though they come somewhat at random. The story goes that the fifth Guru, Arjan, who is associated with the composition of the book, suggested (prophesied, they say) that verses of later Guru-martyrs would fill some of these blank pages. And, to be sure, there are couplets of the martyred Tegh Bahadur and one, at least, of the martyred Gobind.

The volume is handwritten—left to right—and, in general, distinctly well done. When they say, as they sometimes do, that "one man" wrote it, they refer to Guru Arjan, who may have dictated the greater part of it, or may have written some of it himself. But it has no signature of his, nor any letters scattered about in obscure, deliberate sequence which would constitute his name or office—Oriental manuscripts are known to have employed this device at times for dates and the names of authors. The surest claim might be that the handwriting is Arjan's own, but even then a good deal of variation must be reckoned with. Some of the writing is more or less a scrawl, and the sizes of the characters are varied. There is some little evidence of 'trial-writing' (for trying out the pen ?). There are times when the letters form no words at all, but are singly strung along, sometimes a single letter in extended repetition. The characters, we may say right here, are all *Gurmukhi*, or, the script of the "Guru-mouth" pronouncements, which were devised by the second Guru, Angad, as an exclusive alphabet in which to write the scriptures of the new religion. The characters were largely reclamations from either Panjabi sources, now and then old Persian, some Arabic, and some *Nagari* symbols, modified, but truly expressive of the language, the vernacular, of the common people of the Panjab region. These are the characters which the Sikhs are now proposing as the only alphabet for the writing and printing of Panjabi, making *Gurmukhi*—Punjabi the official language of East Panjab, one of the eighteen newly constituted language areas of India, set up thus as units of political administration. *Gurmukhi* in itself has been a sign of Sikh separation from Hinduism and Islam, despite the large voca-

bulary common among all the folk of upper and northwestern India. It has served the Sikhs as Urdu in its Arabic-Persian character has served the Muslims, and as Prakrits, such as Hindi and Marathi related to the Sanskrit, have served the Hindus.

Other variations also might suggest composite authorship or amanuensis service. Some lines are blotted out, but not erased—blotted with some sort of dark green ink. The writer may have made mistakes or may have entered repetitions which he would correct. Or, one writer may have altered another writer's lines? The *Mul Mantra*, or "root passage," of the Book, of Nanak's *Japji*, in particular, appears two times. If it appears on the front page of the book "in Guru Arjandev's own hand," it appears in still another hand on leaf No. 541, and some say this is the writing of Har Gobind, Arjan's son, the sixth Guru. And there is a miniature likeness of Har Gobind lodged by someone at this leaf, as also there is one of Arjan inserted at his copy of the basic verse.

The book is bound, although loosely enough to be opened readily at any leaf or page. The two covers are boards clad in a golden silk cloth. There is no lettering on the outer faces, no record either there or elsewhere of the binding, when, where or by whom done. The pages were, most likely, separately inscribed. Perhaps the leaves were, numbered as the penmanship progressed. They may have lain long unbound, merely wrapped together, as is true of many Indian writings, some of which were never bound. The leaves, they say, are made of what is called Kashmiri-paper, a heavy, parchment-like production. They are all whole, save where insects have done a bit of harm—nothing much. The edges of each leaf, bottom, top and outer edge, are reinforced by extra strips glued on—or, were the edges worn and thus repaired?

The Book has had rough treatment, whether from man or circumstance, according to the story (Tegh Bahadur's hiding it in water has been mentioned). They say it was once stolen from Guru Har Gobind long before by his rebellious (treasonable?) grandson named Dhir Mal, and that Dhir Mal, while he had it, had to hide it for fear of damage from the Muslims. There may have been some transfers of the volume, but it has remained generally in the neighbourhood of Kartarpur. It may have suffered sometimes not merely from the threats of enemies but from the indifference of its own custodians. It was a somewhat natural indifference, after all. Guru Nanak himself had no notion of a sacred text. Circumstance rather than intention may have determined its formation. Some need for it arose, and as its contents gathered they assumed-

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a more than human quality, and reverence for the book was gradually acquired. During the years of the ten successive Gurus themselves, or until A.D. 1708, at the latest, the personal Guruship was itself superior,—except as the *heavenly* Guru was supreme. A sort of divine right by heredity came into the people's thought with reference to their Gurus, and their teachings were regarded with increased respect. In time the Book itself was formed, and reverence for it came by slow but sure development until the Book displaced the earthly Guru in the end.

The reverence with which the Sikhs regard their *Adi Granth* may now be briefly and concretely pictured by reference to a *darshan*, or religious exhibition, of the book at Kartarpur. This *darshan* was arranged at a special time for the present writer's benefit—with some friends, and some neighbours of the town, to share it. Usually a *darshan* occurs each month when the moon is at the full, but Sikhs are generous with their religious assets, and may hold a *darshan* on occasion. But the volume is never handled without due ceremony. When not in use it rests within a fireproof safe in the Shish Mahal, or "Hall of Mirrors," on an upper floor of the palace-fort which Guru Arjan built. There is a legal guardian of the book, the Raja of Kartarpur, and a *gyani* scholar or reader, immediate in charge of it. The repository Hall of Mirrors serves as a *gur-dwara*, or place of worship.

The little party for whom the special *darshan* was arranged entered the hall with appropriate behaviour, having removed their shoes outside. The *gyani* welcomed them. Rugs were spread for them about the altar which had been placed before they came. While they took their places on the rugs, the *gyani* went about the opening of the safe and the exhibition of the precious volume, not exposing the book itself at once, save as it was wrapped in many coverings. As he brought it out the company stood at reverent attention. He rested it a while on the top of his *pagri*-covered head, while he spread a floor-cloth on which to lay it, while he made the altar of plush and pillows ready by some slight adjustment. Thereafter he picked up the heavy volume in its many wrappings and laid it on the altar, pronouncing as he did so prescribed formulae and uttering prescribed prayers. Next, he laid open deftly and neatly one by one the seven wrappings of cloth and silk, folding their corners and edges to rest free of the open book. When the volume came at last to view, it was opened by chance at what proved to be a page that held a *sloka*, or distich, of Kabir (whose teachings Nanak and the Sikhs were heir to), which was accordingly intoned by the officiating *gyani*. In the English it might run as follows :

"Om, by the true Guru's favor !

Kabir says, I have neither a thatch-roof nor a hovel, neither house nor village;

Hari, methinks, will ask, 'Who art thou ?'

I have neither caste nor name, in fact."

And then we all became informal, at the *gyani's* invitation. Two of us were invited to draw up at either side of him before the open book. He even gave us leave to turn the pages, but we deemed it reasonable not to touch them. Instead, he turned them at our suggestion and direction, as we carried on a question-answer conversation. We saw the varied lettering, sometimes crude, but always clear, the occasional discolorations due to alterations and erasures, as described above, the decorations at the tops of certain pages, and now and then words entered in the margins—for example, *sudh*, which is the same as *shudh*, with the meaning thereof "verified," as if some passage had been compared somehow—with another version, may be.

There is an index or table of contents several pages long, at the beginning. It lists, together with other items, the many, various hymns according to their *rags*, or "tunes," whether by name *Srirag*, *Majh*, *Gauri* or *Asa*. The opening section is liturgical, with readings for morning, evening, and special prayers (the entire volume, of course, is rhythmical). And then comes Nanak's *Japji*, or book of "psalms," with its *Mul Mantra*, its thirty-eight hymns, and its postlude, all in a wide variety of lines and tunes. The *Mul Mantra* stands alone on a decorated page, in a position similar to that which the *Fatiha*, or "Opener" sura of the Muslim Arabic *Qura'an* has occupied. The place of honor thus assigned the *Fatiha* may have served as an example to the Sikhs. The *Mul Mantra*, or basic verse of the *Adi Granth*, runs somewhat as follows in the English:

"Unity, active OM, True Name !

Actor, Pervader, Fearless, Devoid of Enmity,

Whom time and the ages never encumber;

Self-existent, perceptible Guru—Praise !

Pre-eminent Truth, primordial Truth,

Truth that is, saith Nanak, Truth that will abide forever."

After the *Mul Mantra* and the *Japji*, which every faithful Sikh will learn by heart and repeat each day, come the bulkier portions, the four types of tunes. Then follow twenty-six minor portions, and ultimately the parts containing verses from Kabir and other bhagats. There are seventy-nine *rags* in all, classified in groups of six or seven, each for one of the dozen times of day, except for the group of fifteen devoted to the

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latter part of evening.

At the close to the *darshan* and the question-answer conference, seeds of the aromatic cardamon, and *prasad*, small "favours", were distributed, as the custom is with guests, by an attendant, and *hars*, or "wreaths," were hung by the *gyani* about the party's necks. And last of all, the book was reverently closed, its wrappings tied in place, and restored, until the next occasion, to its usual resting-place.

It is clear that some day the book must yield to other uses, also. Historical and textual critics who are the likewise devoted to religion should examine it, men whose judgment can be taken by the Sikhs at large, and at once respected by all earnest students of religion. Several competent Sikhs are, in fact, engaged at present in the task. Even chemical tests as well as other means might possibly be employed sometime to determine dates with reference to the paper and other physical ingredients of the book. Indian weather is very hard on record, but doubtless all resources that now exist have not been utilized with reference to the book. Some comparisons would be immediately in order—for example, the *Granth* versions of the bhagats (Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas, Farid, and others) with versions of them which exist elsewhere. Even students of linguistic science would find these sources fruitful in themselves, not to mention fitting the language of the *Granth* into the general setting of vernaculars. Nothing theologically or philosophically profound would be discovered, but the simple doctrines of the Sikhs should be more fully understood within their setting.

There are two other *Granth*s to share comparative appraisal with the *Adi Granth* of Kartarpur, namely, a copy which, they say (the present writer knows it only by report) exists in the village of Mangat in the district of Gujrat well to the north of Lahore (this village and many other sites dear to Sikhs are now in Pakistan), and the well-known edition of the tenth (*daswan*) and last Guru, Gobind Singh, known often as the *Daswan Granth*. The Mangat version, as the story goes, is copy of the *Adi Granth* as this had been completed under Guru Arjan and his scribe Gur Das in A.D. 1604. The copy was made by a certain Bhai Bannu of the neighbourhood of Gujrat, who some how got temporary possession of, or secured access to, the Gur Das version, and added to it a few hymns attributed to a devout Rajput lady, Mirabai, and secured the seal of approval for his version from the reigning Guru! The *Daswan Granth*, on the other hand, is not a copy of the *Adi Granth*, nor was it meant to supersede it. Rather, it adds to the *Adi Granth* hymns by Guru Gobind Singh (it was he who first assumed the title

"Singh") and some by his father, Tegh Bahadur. What this edition was in the original is a matter of Sikh recollection and rehearsal, for the first manuscript of it was lost (destroyed) during Gobind's restless times. However, the contents were reconstructed, and they fall today within the larger Bible of the Sikhs. All Sikhs of whatever sect are committed to the *Adi Granth*, nor did any of them register objection in 1734 to its enlargement by the addition of the *Daswan Granth*. Singhs, of course, give special but not exclusive homage to the latter.

Official copies of the *Adi Granth* were printed years ago for use in the temples and gurdwaras, but the edition was for the most part, an un-critical reproduction of the Kartarpur original, plus fifty-six couplets of Guru Tegh Bahadur and one which his son, Guru Gobind Singh, wrote in response to his father's writing while a prisoner of Aurangzib in Delhi. Here follows Gobind's couplet :

"Strength is provided, the fetters are not locked,  
expedients are everywhere;

Everything is in thy hand, thou art thine own sure helper."

Printed editions of the *Granth*s in various sizes, bindings, and so on, and editions of Nanak's *Japji*, in particular, are on sale in every bookshop of the Sikhs. Although the official form, whether script or type, is *Gurmukhi*, there are *Nagari* (Hindi character) editions, also. The Book looms large among the people. There may even be something of bibliolatriy among them. At any rate, the Book occupies the center of the shrine—two copies rest on the altar in the Darbar Sahib, or so-called Golden Temple, in Amritsar. It is not held generally to be sacred to the touch, but every now and then some lowly devotee will touch it reverently. On occasion extensive portion, sometimes the whole volumes of the *Adi Granth*, are intoned by *gyanis* or *Granthis* (there are no priests) to the accompaniment of drums, as worshippers come and go. But there is some other indication of royalty assigned it : a canopy is hung above it and royal peacock feathers are waved over it. The *Granth* itself enjoins Sikhs to worship nothing but True Name, as representing God, and educated Sikhs obey this wise injunction, but commoners, illiterates, especially, often regard the Book itself with awe and obvious devotion. The *darshan* at Kartarpur was an impressive demonstration of something more than a curator's laudable esteem of a rare and precious volume—and what conclusions might be drawn from the reluctance of the guest to touch it ?

What are the teachings of the Book itself ? What is the essence of the Sikh religion, of enlightened worship, in particular ? Nanak was the

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founder of the order, although he did not plan to institute, much less to organize, a new religion, or a separate faith. He lived nearly seventy years (ca. A.D. 1470-1540) in northern India, mostly, among the Hindus and the Muslims (Muslims then made up ten or fifteen per cent. of the total population). The followers of these religions had found during many centuries so little in matters of religion that was common to them all, despite the fact that, in general, the Indian Muslims had first of all been Hindus. Indeed, Muslims steadily increased in numbers, and the two religions were hostile towards each other, the Muslims especially hostile towards the Hindu idols. Hindus had no special creed—have never had—but Muslims had, one that was simple, exclusive, and emphatic. Muslims worshipped Allah, the only God to them, and counted as unforgivable sin the association of any other god with Allah. Hindus worshipped many gods, gods innumerable, in fact, in the thought of common people. Islam was a fellowship; true Muslims among themselves were brothers. Hinduism, on the other hand, rested on distinctions in color, class, and occupation which came about by *karma* and transmigration, a man being born to his own peculiar station. It was only in a mystic way that some Hindus and some Muslims found things in common. Both Hindu and Muslim mystics—Muslim sufis, for example—disdained the world and sought withdrawal from it, practising toward such an end a sort of self-effacement. The Muslim found Allah and the Hindu found pantheistic Brahma by way of this mystico-ascetic discipline. But Nanak at the outset was more aware of and more impressed by the realistic tension which existed between the majority of Muslims and the greater masses of the Hindus.

Nanak sought to do away with all distinctions, whether of theology or caste, to preach at once a social fellowship and a doctrine of One God. He avoided both Brahma and Allah as a name for God and chose *Sat Nam*, "True Name," presumably allowing the worshipper himself to have regard in private for the object of his worship by any name he chose within the scope and meaning of *Sat Nam*. This, after all was something of an abstract way of getting at reality, something of an incomprehensible and intangible ideal to both the Muslim deist and the polytheistic Hindu, and the program of reconciliation which Nanak was proposing failed. The prescription was, in fact, fundamentally too negative, too "easy-going," if we may think in terms of *Sahajdharis*, the ultimate designation of Nanak's more immediate adherents, with or from whom the *Keshdharis* "the hairy one," or Singhs ("lions") of Guru Gobind, stand in contrast. Sikhism has survived by other methods than that which Nanak had of himself proposed, though some crucial change of circumstances as the

Guruship continued, and by a change of content which fixed the minds of Sikhs more immediately upon the world. Sikhism found itself in opposition to the Muslims when the Muslims made war upon the Sikhs; and, as years went by, from Arjan's time increasing numbers of the Sikhs became a military people. Political expediency came upon the scene, and Guru Gobind organized the *Khalsa*, or body of the "Pure," which made itself an independent, ruling nation in the later days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Hindus and Muslims have remained conspicuously apart, and Sikhism became a separate order—especially those Sikhs who have borne the name of *Singhs*, *Keshdharis*, and *Akalis* (*Akal*, the Timeless or Eternal, was a later name which Gobind used for God, which an influential sub-division has retained, and which is represented nowadays in a body called Akali Dal, or Branch). These more active, aggressive and nationalistic Sikhs insist upon retaining their distinctive culture and peculiar way of life but they and other Sikhs rest their claims and case primarily upon the moral and religious truths of Nanak.

The *Japji* is Nanak's special gospel. It exhibits devotion to "Nity, active OM, True Name" (*Ikk Om Sat Nam*, in the Kartarpur edition, and *Ek Onkar Satnamu* in certain reproductions) and offers for worship "the Lord" (*Sahib* is the word), or "the Lord of Lords" (*Nathu Nathi*), who is "pervasive, fearless, devoid of enmity," who is "pre-eminent, primordial and eternal Truth" (*Sachu*), or "the True One" (*Sacha*) .. That is the Name by which men can be saved who fix their minds upon it dependent upon its wisdom and its mercy. It is obedience (*hukm*, "Order" or what is done by the will of God) rather than reflection, contemplation, knowledge, or mystical design, rather than salutations, genuflections, and the mere repetition of the scriptures, rather than caste-observance, pilgrimage, or tabus, which is man's way of safety and ultimate salvation,

"Salvation's doors (*mokh duaru*) are opened by obedience,  
One may even save his family by obedience;  
Obedience to the Guru gets salvation.

\* \* \* \*

Who knows the Guru in his heart has safety.

\* \* \* \*

Salvation comes at last to those  
whose thought rests on the Name."

"Guru" in the *Japji* is not a person, nor a book, but, God, and *Sat Nam* is God's name.

Guru Gobind Singh himself made some attempt at naming God, not



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only making reference to him as *Akal*, but also in more warlike terms, as *Sarbloh*, "All steel," and *Asi-pani*, "Sword-in-hand." But most of all, Gobind emphasized the *hukm*, or "order," which Sikhs are to obey. Specifically he declared that "the *Granth* is by order the Guru of all Sikhs," he proclaimed obedience to the heavenly Guru's own command. All things, including Sikhism, had come to be by Sat Nam's *hukm* "ordering." Such is the note he uttered in harmony with an item in Nanak's own gospel also. This Hukm-theology and ethics became expressive of the common consciousness of Sikhs, whereby the Sikh religion has continued and gained way :

"By Sat Nam's *hukm*, have all things been formed,  
No one is blessed, unless He orders it.  
Nature runs her course as He has ordered it.  
All serve beneath His order, and none acts without it.  
Under thine order, Lord, hath all been done,  
And naught is of itself alone."

Battle in its own time was by God's order, and by his Name, and underneath his banner was the *Khalsa* sometime realized. The caste strain in a way, after all, has prevailed among the Sikhs, for they came originally of martial Hindu stock. More than the warrior branch of Hindus, the Kshatriya Jats and Rajputs, have ever done, however, their kindered Sikhs have done in producing a distinctive scripture of their own. And circumstance has made of Sikhs a separate nation. The Union of Sikh States, very recently accomplished, may continue to conserve what is distinctive in the faith. And, we may hope, it may likewise afford peculiar opportunity and incentive toward an altogether comprehensive and intensive study of the Bible of the Sikhs.

## The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers

GANDA SINGH

The impact of Guru Nanak's teachings on the lives of the people of the Panjab was marvelous indeed. It not only raised them spiritually into "men of truthful word, devout austerity and of accepted prayer-mindedness, looking upon friends and foes alike"—*Maqbūl-al maqāl wa ahl-i-riāzat wa mustjab-ul-dāwāt Khwesh-o-begānā dar nazar-i-eshān yaksān wa dost-o-dushman nīzd-i-shān barābar*—as Munshi Sujān Rai Bhandari of Batala wrote in 1695 in his *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārīkh*, p. 70, but it also transformed them into saint-warriors who took upon themselves the protection of the poor and helpless against the tyrannical aggressors in the land.

This is best illustrated in what Guru Hargobind said to the Maratha saint *Sāmarth* Ram Das at Srinagar in Garhwal. Guru Hargobind was there on his way to Nanak-mata when saint Ram Das arrived at the place during his pilgrimage rambles towards Badri Kedar and Badri Narayan. He was surprised to see the Sikh Guru armed, riding a horse, and accompanied by a large number of followers. The old traditionalist *Sādhū* found it difficult to reconcile the two seemingly opposite phases of Guru Hargobind's life. He asked the Guru : "I had heard that you occupy the *gaddī* of Guru Nanak. Nanak was a *tyāgī Sādhū*—a saint who had renounced the world. You are wearing arms and keeping an army and horses. You allow yourself to be called *Sachā Pādshāh*, a True King. What sort of a *Sādhū* are you ? Guru Hargobind replied : "Internally a hermit and externally a prince. Arms mean protection for the poor and helpless and destruction for the tyrant. Guru Nanak had not renounced the world but had renounced *māyā*, the self and ego." *Sāmarth* Ram Das was pleased to hear this and said : "This appealeth to my mind."

The actual words of the *Sakhi* are :

ਏਕ ਬਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਲਮੀਰ [ਗੜ੍ਹਵਾਲ] ਮੇਂ ਟਿਕੇ ਥੇ । ਤਹਾਂ ਏਕ ਸਾਧੂ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਕੋ ਆਯਾ । ਦੱਖਣੀ ਥਾ ਨਾਮ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ । ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਖੇਲਤੇ ਆਵਤੇ ਥੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਪਰ ਅਸਵਾਰ । ਸਾਥ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਬਹੁਤ ਥੀ । ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹਓ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਥਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਗੱਦੀ ਪਰ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈਂ । ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਸਾਧੂ ਥੇ । ਤੁਮ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰੇ ਹੋਨਿ ਘੋੜੇ ਫੌਜ ਰਖੀ ਹੈਂ । ਸੱਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਹਾਵਤਾ ਹੈਂ । ਕੈਸਾ ਸਾਧੂ ਹੈਂ । ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਹਿਆ ਬਾਤਨ ਛਕੀਰੀ, ਜ਼ਾਹਰ ਅਮੀਰੀ । ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਗਰੀਬ ਕੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ, ਜਰਵਾਣੇ ਕੀ ਭੱਖਿਆ । ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ

ਸੋਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਿਆਗਿਆ ਥਾ, ਮਾਯਾ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਥੀ। ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਪਰਸੰਨ ਹੋਯਾ ਕਹਿਆ ਇਹ  
ਹਮਾਰੇ ਮਨ ਭਾਵਤੀ ਹੈ। (ਸਾਖੀ 39, ਪੰਜਾਹ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ)

The saint was highly impressed by the words of Guru Hargobind. He could see the truth and vitality thereof in the lives of his Sikh followers whose faith in God and unquestioning surrender to the Will of the Guru were to him a hopeful guarantee for the fulfilment of the mission of the first Guru Nanak in the rejuvenation of the people of Hindustan whom the sword and fire of Babur's invading hordes had terrified into political surrender. They had been reduced to abject slavery by the blood-thirsty adventurers from the north-west. With no regard for human life and socio-religious culture of the people of this country, the wolfish foreigners had been for centuries behaving towards them like hungry tigers. This state of affairs could only be ended by infusing a new manly spirit into the depressed and disheartened people of the land who had not only been divided and demoralised but had also been deprived of all interest in life by the negative religio-social philosophy preached to them by their Brahmanical priests and religious leaders. Guru Nanak, saint Ram Das felt, had really diagnosed the malady of the people and had administered to them the right remedies for placing them on the path of healthy and active national life as self-respecting sons of the land. It was, evidently, therefore, that Ram Das told Guru Hargobind in his parting words, as recorded by Shri Hanumant Swami in his *Shri Samarthānchi Bakhar*, that the Guru already had the right type of instruction and advice from the great master Nanak and that he needed none from himself. In fact, Saint Ram Das himself seems to have been inspired by what he saw in the Sikh camp of Guru Hargobind, and this was helpful in initiating the great Maratha warrior Shivaji into a life of national upliftment. On his departure Ram Das presented to the Guru a piece of ochre coloured cloth and a rosary as parting gifts.

It was in the diversity of religions and religious worship that lay the disunity of mankind. There was but one religion and that was the religion of Truth, if any one were to practise it firmly, said Guru Nanak—  
ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ (*Basant*, I, *Ashtpadi*, iii, 3). And, the oneness of religion depended upon the Oneness of the True God, the Creator of the universe—*Ik Onkār Satnām Kartā Purkh*. According to the Guru, He is Fearless and Without Enmity. The Guru emphasized on this quality of the Lord as he believed that one becomes like the one he worships or serves—*Jaisā sevai taiso hoē* (*Gauri Ashtpadi*, vii-4).<sup>1</sup> And, the Guru wanted his

1. ਜੇਸਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੇਸੇ ਹੋਇ। (ਗੁਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰਨਾ 221.)

Muslims, Brahmans and Sudras, touchables and untouchables. To him, all were children of the same One father—God—who is the God of all gods and from him emanate all souls, and He dwells in all souls (*Slok Sahaskriti*, 4).

Guru Nanak was a strong advocate of the cause of women whom the Brahmanical priests and society had reduced to a state of subjection. The woman, according to him, was in no way inferior to man. In fact, she was a personification of service to the mankind. Without her there could have been no human existence. It is of her that man is born and it is she who keeps the human race going. "Why call her bad or low, of whom are born kings—men great and powerful?" (*Asa Var*, I-19.)<sup>5</sup>

He felt greatly concerned over the political condition of the people under the foreign rule which had not only corrupted the rulers themselves but had also adversely affected the culture and morality of the subjects. The rule of the north-western Pathans was not a Muslim theocracy, nor of the Mughals who had come to India from across the Amu river to the north of Afghanistan. They had not come here for the propagation of Islam and had not established any theological seminaries for the purpose. It is true that some of the *Ulama* historians have glorified the Muslim invaders as great religious crusaders who had led religious campaigns into the *Kafir*-land of India for the spread of Islam. But, by this, they have not only falsified history but have also, unwittingly, tarnished the fair name of Islam which nowhere sanctions the kind of brutalities committed by these invaders. The only motive that had brought them to this country was their lust for gold and power.

A person mad after riches is all-blind and dumb and he hearkens not to the word of religion and religious prophets. The same is the condition of the power-hungry aggressors who not unoften transgress all religious ethics and codes of morality and ride rough shod over the rights and sentiments of their victims. This was exactly the state of affairs with the Lodhi rulers of the country and the Mughal invader whose high-handed oppression, and fire and sword, had played havoc among the people of the Panjab. Of this, Guru Nanak had not only been a contemporary but also an eye-witness in many cases. Seeing the tyranny of the domineering Lodhi kings and their official agents, the Guru observed that the kings behaved like tigers and their subordinate officials like dogs, disturbing and oppressing people at all times of day and night—*Rājē shīnh muqaddam kuttē, jāe jagāyan baithē suttē*. "While the King's officials

5. ਜੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਰ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਉ ਜੋਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ । (ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ, I-19, ਪੰਨਾ 473.)

wounded the people with their nails, the curs licked the blood and bile that trickled down the wounds," said he. (*Var Malar*, 1,22-2,p. 1287.)<sup>6</sup>

The very fact that some one domineers over another fellow-being is sinful. He has no moral right to it. Every one is born free and has right to live free. It is only for mutual help for a family-like happy life, on a reciprocal basis, that the co-operation of other human beings is required and sought, and it is in that spirit of goodwill and understanding that it should be offered. The subjection of one by another to derive undue benefit from his labour engenders dislike and hatred for the aggressor. And when it comes to be multiplied by repeated acts of aggression, there is at first a protest and then a revolt with such a vehemence as to cause loss not only to the aggressor's self and power but also to his very life and to the lives of his near and dear ones. The aggression and oppression over one's weaker fellow-beings is not only sinful but is also irreligious—a gross disobedience of the teaching of the great masters and prophets, whether of the east or of the west. And, such an aggressor is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim in the true sense of the words.

According to Guru Nanak, a man's religion lies in his conduct of life, in his behaviour towards God's creatures, his fellow-beings, and not merely in his external appearance and soft-spoken words. The externals are only aids to help him keep to the path of righteousness. It was, therefore, that he said to the Gorakh-panthi Siddha Yogis during his visit to Gorakhmata (now called Nanakmata) :

Yoga or religion does not consist in an ascetic's patched coat,  
a Yogi's staff, or in ashes smeared on the body.

Religion does not consist in wearing ear-rings, close cropping of the  
head or in blowing horns.

Religion does not consist in mere words.

He who looks on all men as equal is religious.

Religion does not consist in living in cemeteries or places of cremation  
or in sitting in posture of contemplation.

Religion does not consist in wanderings to foreign lands or in bath-  
ing at places of pilgrimage.

Abide in God, pure amidst the impurities of the world, thus shalt

6. ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਂਹ ਮੁਕਰਮ ਕੁਤੇ । ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੇਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ।  
ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਰਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਾਓ ।  
ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੇ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ । (ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ, 22-2, ਪੰਨਾ 1287.)

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thou find the way of religion. (*Suhi I, Ghar vii, 1-2*)<sup>7</sup>

Guru Nanak had no sympathy for the way of life of the ascetic Siddhas and Yogis who had forsaken the world and, with it, their duties and obligations to society. He was a man of the masses and a prophet of the people. He refused to sit idle feelinglessly in slumbering meditation like the *Yogis* while the people around him groaned under the heel of the oppressor. He expressed his deep concern for his people in his conversation with the Gorakhpanthi *yogis* of Mount Meru. "The earth is all seized by sin. The accomplished saints and sages, the Siddhas, are hiding themselves in the recesses of mountains. Who (no one) is there to save the world?" said he in reply to a question of the Siddha yogis. (Bhai Gurdas, *Var*, 1-29.)

He wished his disciples to be servants of God through service of His people. "Having created the human body, God has installed His very self therein", said he. And, "This world is the chamber of God wherein the True One resides—*Ih jagg Sachē ki hai kothrī, Sachē kā vich vās.*"<sup>8</sup> Therefore, with this human body, "Let us be of service in this world so that we may find a seat in the Court of the Lord—*Vich Dunīyā sēv kamāyīē tān dargeh baisān pāyīē.* (*Sri Rag, ghar, I, 33-4, p. 26*).<sup>9</sup> "Man's life is as his acts constrain him. As a man soweth, so shall he reap, as he earneth so shall he eat" (*Rag Suhi*).<sup>10</sup> "Love of God will germinate in thy heart, and thus shalt thou gain imperishable merit" (*Rag Sorath*). "Truth is [no doubt] higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living" (*Sri Rag*)."<sup>11</sup>

## 7. ਐ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਖਿੰਞਾ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਭੰਡੈ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਰੜਾਈਏ । ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੂੰਡਿ ਮੁਛਾਈਏ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਵਾਈਏ । ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਏ ॥੧॥ ਗਲੀ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ । ਏਕ ਚਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ । ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸ ਵਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੇਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ । ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਏ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੈ ਤਾ ਸਹਸਾ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਈਐ । ਨਿਬਰੁ ਬਰੇ ਸਹਜਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ । ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਏ ॥੩॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਤਿਆ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਐਸਾ ਜੇਗੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ । ਵਾਜੇ ਬਾਬਹੁ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਵਾਜੇ ਤਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਈਐ । ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਤਉ ਪਾਈਐ । (ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ I, ਘਰੁ 7, ਪੰਨਾ 731.)

8. ਇਹ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ । (ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ-2, ਪੰਨਾ 463.)

9. ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ । ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ (ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ, I, 33-4, ਪੰਨਾ 26.)

10. ਜੇਸਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੈ ਸੋ ਖਟੈ ਸੋ ਖਾਇ । (ਰਾਗ ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਹਲਾ I, ਪੰਨਾ 730.)

11. ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰ... (ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ, I, 4-8-14, ਪੰਨਾ 62.)

The Guru had been born in a predominantly Muslim area and had spent years of his youth at Sultanpur, the virtual capital of the Lodhis. At the latter place he had not only seen the practical lives of the ruling people but also of the priestly classes. He had also travelled throughout the length and breadth of India and also to the centres of Islamic culture in the west where he had seen at close quarters the difference between the great humanitarian precepts of the Prophet as contained in the Holy Quran and the egocentric lives of some of the Muslim rulers and priests. While the main central theme of Islamic teachings is the Unity and Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, as proclaimed in the *Rabb-ul-Ālamīn, Wāhid hū lā-shrīk*, the self-conceited and power-mad Afghan rulers looked upon themselves as superior beings and upon their Hindu subjects as inferiors and infidels. This was self-contradictory, said Guru Nanak, and he observed :

It is difficult to call oneself a Musalman—

If he is really one [with the following virtues], then alone is he one. First of all let him scrape and polish his mind clean with the sweetness of faith (in God) ;

And then, with faith in the leader of the faith, let him dispel the illusion of life and death.

Let him submit to the Will of God, and, with faith in the Eternal Creator, let him lose his self.

Let him be merciful to all creatures; then, sayeth Nanak, can he be called a Musalman. (*Majh Var*, I, viii-i.)<sup>12</sup>

He alone is a Musalman who scrubs off impurities from his mind and action. (*Dhānasri*, I, 4-5-7.)<sup>13</sup>

To usurp some one else's right is like pork for one [Muslim] and beef for another [Hindu]. (*Mājh Vār*, I, vii-2.)<sup>14</sup>

Let mercy be thy mosque, faith thy prayer-mat, and honest life thy holy book.

To be a real Musalman, let humility be thy circumcision, and cool-

- 
12. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ।  
ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਢੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਸੁਨਾਵੈ ।  
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਢੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ।  
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ।  
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ । (ਮਾਝ ਵਾਰ, ਮਹਲਾ 1,8-1, ਪੰਨਾ 141.)
13. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸੋਈ ਮਲੁ ਢੋਵੈ... (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ I, 4-5-7, ਪੰਨਾ 661.)
14. ਹਰੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਯਰ ਉਸ ਗਾਇ ।... (ਮਾਝ ਵਾਰ, I, 7-2, ਪੰ. 141.)

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headedness thy fasts.

Let good actions be thy holy place of pilgrimage, truth thy spiritual guide, and kind actions thy sacred text be.

Let His will be thy rosary, then, sayeth Nanak, will He preserve thy honour [as a true Musalman] (*Māj̥h Vār*, I, *Slok*, vii-i.)<sup>15</sup>

It may be observed that Guru Nanak did not criticise any religion as such. He only criticised the ways of the lives of such of their followers as had strayed away from their path and suggested to them what a true *dharma* should be and how a true Musalman should conduct himself in his relationship with the other sons and daughters of the *Rabb-ul-Ālamīn*.

It is true that the teaching of Guru Nanak mostly related to the spiritual uplift of mankind and social goodwill and understanding among peoples of different creeds and classes as children of the same One father. But he was not a visionary idealist or a speculative theorist. He was a practical man devoted to the service of mankind and his heart bled to see the miseries of people wherever they were. At home, he was intensely patriotic as a true son of India and shed tears of blood to see the devastation caused by the invasion of Babur in 1521 when the Mughal hordes sacked and burnt down the town of Saidpur (Eminabad). "Babur rushed down from Kabul with the bridal procession of sin," said the Guru, "and by force demanded the hand of the bride [of Hindustan]. People sang the paeon of murder and smeared themselves with saffron of blood" (*Tilang*, I, *ghar* i, 5-1). "Khurasan came to be protected and Hindustan was terrorized...Didst Thou, O Lord, feel no compassion when people wailed during so much of destruction. Thou art the same for all." He was greatly moved to see the pitiable condition of the Indian women at the hands of the Mughal soldiers. "The women who wore beautiful dresses...have their locks shorn with scissors and dust is thrown upon their heads...dishonoured and, with ropes round their necks, they are carried away by soldiers." (*Āsā*, I, *Asht.*, xi.)<sup>16</sup>

The sack of Saidpur is thus described in the *Tārīkh-i-Farishtā* of Muhammad Qasim :

15. ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਰੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ।  
ਸਰਮ ਸੁਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੇਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ।  
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ।  
ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜ । (ਮਾਝ ਵਾਰ, I, 7-1, ਪੰਨਾ 141.)
16. ਜਿਨੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ।  
ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਧੁੜਿ ।...  
ਦੁਤਾ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੇ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ । (ਆਸਾ I, ਅਛਟਪਦੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 417.)



Baber, in the year nine hundred and twenty-six, marched a third time towards India, chastising the Patans in his way, till he reached Salcot, the inhabitants of which country submitted, and saved their possessions. But the people of Seidpoor, erecting the standard of defence, were in the end put all to the sword, their wealth given up to depredation, and their children and wives carried away captive.

(Alex. Dow, *The History of Hindustan*, 1792, ii, p. 114.)

The number of men and women carried away as slaves on this occasion is mentioned as thirty thousand.

"If a powerful person were to attack another equally powerful person," said Guru Nanak, "There shall be no [or much less] ground for grievance, but if a ferocious lion were to fall upon a herd of cattle, the master (the protector) of the herd should be answerable for it." (*Asā*, I, 39, 42.)<sup>17</sup>

In equally strong language Guru Nanak upbraided the so-called 'Masters of the herd,' the Lodhi Sultans of India, for not standing manfully for the defence of their subjects and allowing the precious gem of the country—India—to be easily snatched away by the foreigner. To quote his own words: "The dogs (the Lodhi rulers) have thrown away the invaluable gem. When they are dead and gone, no one will remember them with regard." (*Asā*, I, 39, 42.)<sup>18</sup>

These sayings and admonitions of Guru Nanak went down as a heritage to Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh and help explain to some extent the gradual transformation of Sikhism into a militant church, sanctifying the use of arms in the service of weak and helpless, referred to by Guru Hargobind in his conversation with Saint Ram Das, as mentioned earlier.

But men do not always live by *jnan* or knowledge imparted to them by saints and scholars. They mostly follow the habits acquired by them in the company of their friends, good or bad. If they were all guided by *jnan*, this world of ours would be the land of godly people, but, in fact, it is not so. It is full of people with an over-dose of self and ego, of pain and misery, both for themselves and for others. It was, therefore, that Guru Nanak organised his disciples and followers into *Sangats* or congregations where they met in a spirit of goodwill and understanding, sang

17. ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸ ਨ ਹੋਈ ।

ਸਕਤਾ ਸਾਹਿ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੇ ਵਗੇ ਖਸਮੇ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ । (ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ I, 39, 42, ਪੰਨਾ 360.)

18. ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜੇ ਵਿਗਿਓ ਕੁੰਤੀ ਮੋਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ...। (ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ I, 39, 42, ਪੰਨਾ 360.)

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the hymns of the Master and prayed to the Lord to grant to them gift of the recitation of His Holy Name, of honest livelihood and sharing their earnings with others and of service of their fellow-beings at large, without distinction of caste and creed. Wherever the Guru went during his tours and travels, he established these *sangats*. In due course of time, they became centres of Sikh missionary movement for the spread of the Master's message, and for the demonstration and practice of his teachings. To these *Sangats* were added *Pangats* or sitting together of all present in rows for dining, irrespective of caste and creed, of Hindu and Muslim, or of rich and poor. These two institutions not only helped knit together the followers of the Guru as equal brothers in faith—*Gur-Bhāi*—but also to win the sympathy and approbation of their Hindu and Muslim neighbours and countrymen. The forums of *Sangats* were known as *dharmsālā*. Guru Nanak's own place of *Sangat* or congregation at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) on the western side of the river, opposite to Dera Baba Nanak in the Gurdaspur district, was known as *Bābā Nānak dī Dhormsālā*. It was in these *Sangats* that the *Sikhs*, as the disciples of Guru Nanak came to be called, learnt to practise Sikhism, shook off their old prejudices and rubbed off their angularities. Here they all addressed one another as *Bhāi*, or brothers, as Guru Nanak addressed his companions and disciples like *Bhai* Mardana, of Muslim origin, and *Bhai* Bala, *Bhai* Buddha, *Bhai* Lehna (his successor), coming from amongst the Hindus, and completely ignored the social and religious distinctions of the Brahmanical faith to which they no longer subscribed. *Maubid* Zulfikar Ardistani, the Parsi author of the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, who had seen Sikhism in practice at Kiratpur under the guidance of Gurus Har-gobind and Har Rai in the forties of the seventeenth century, tells us:

There is no restriction among them that a Brahman may not become the disciple of a Khatri, for Nanak was a Khatri and no Guru among them was from the Brahmins. ... Similarly they placed Khatri under the authority of the Jats who belong to the low caste of the *Vaishya*, as the big *masands* of the Guru are mostly Jats. The Brahmins and Khatri become the pupils and disciples of the Guru through the medium of *masands* and are accepted into the pupilage and discipleship of the Guru (p.233).

At Kartarpur, Guru Nanak lived as a house-holder with his wife and sons, taking to agriculture as his profession. His missionary activities, however, continued as usual. This in itself was an object-lesson for the Sikhs to learn. They were to live in the world among their kith and kin, follow their usual vocations of life, and share their earnings with others

in the name of God. This was for them their service and worship of God through service of their fellow-beings. Thus Guru Nanak's *Dharmśālā* at Kartarpur became a true demonstrative laboratory for the practical training of the Sikhs who were to continue the religio-social movement of Sikhism after him. The first essential for the successful continuance of a movement is for its followers to enter literally into the spirit of the teachings of the founder-master and to so adopt them in their lives as to completely identify themselves with him. And this is what happened at the Kartarpur *dharamśālā* which had attracted a number of disciples from different parts of the country. The most devoted of them was Lehna of Khadur whom the Master selected as the next *Gurū* to guide the new community after him.

This was a very happy choice indeed, and Guru Nanak installed him in his place during his life-time under the new name of Guru *Angad*, meaning his own limb, his very self. The Guruship was not a temporal rank to be inherited by his sons. It was a spiritual mission and the spirit of the Master blended with that of the disciple who, on his part, completely merged his personality with that of the founder-Guru and identified himself with him as a part and parcel of his. And thus Angad became a continuation of Nanak. In the same way, all the succeeding Gurus merged themselves into the preceding Nanak-Guru and, in turn, became Nanak themselves. They all composed and sang their hymns under the one common name of Nanak, and not under their own respective names. Thus, the first Guru Nanak continued to be, in spirit, the leader and head of the Sikh movement, eliminating the possibility of schismatic divisions. The author of the *Dābistān-i-Mazāhib* summed up the theory of Guruship when he said, during the time of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai, "The belief of the Sikhs is that all the Gurus are Nanak" (p. 232).

The discipline of the Sikhs — *Sikhi* or *Sikhism* — as a systematized regular way of life was a distinct improvement upon the practice followed by some of the previous movements whose leaders were more or less individualistic in their attitude towards life, and their disciples were named after the leaders themselves and not after their systems of religious belief. For example, the disciples of Ramananda were called *Ramanandi*, and of Kabir and Ravidas (who were both the disciples of Ramananda) as *Kabirpanthi* and *Ravidasi*, respectively. But the followers of Guru Nanak and his successors were all known as Sikhs, including the Gurus themselves. In almost all the cases, the succeeding Gurus were appointed and installed during the life-time of the reigning Gurus who formally

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bowed to their successors and accepted them as their masters and themselves as their Sikhs or disciples. This was the impact of Guru Nanak's discipline and humility upon his successors and followers.

The Guru in Sikhism is the spiritual guide to lead his disciples on the path to God and godliness. He is a guide, a perfect man, who has realized God in his practical life. He, however, does not claim for himself any special position in relation to the Sikhs beyond that of a teacher. A Sikh will, as well, rise to the same spiritual heights as the Master provided he faithfully follows the instructions in the conduct of his life. There will be no difference between the two. (*Asa, Chhant*, IV, 8, 7, 9.) But Guru Gobind Singh goes a step further when he says :

He alone is a Sikh who follows the discipline laid down.

Nay, he becomes my Master and I, his servant.

The voluntary surrender of Guru Gobind Singh to the fold of the baptized *Singhs*, the *Khalsa*, was a thing unique in the history of religions. It not only provides a practical illustration of raising the disciples and devotees to a level of equality with the Guru but also abolishes personal Guruship among the Sikhs for all time to come.

Guru Angad was a zealous missionary who strengthened the unifying institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat* introduced by Guru Nanak. He also felt the need of collecting and recording the hymns and biography of the Guru so that his teachings could be permanently preserved in a compact form for the coming generations. It is unfortunate that the original manuscript of this biography is not now available. Guru Angad also popularized the use of the Panjabi script, the Gurmukhi, among the people to encourage the spread of education among the masses of the country. The Devnagri and the Arabic or Persian scripts were already there, no doubt, but they did not meet the requirements of the Panjabi language in respect of its correct writing and expression. Moreover, the Devnagri was the preserve of the Brahman scholars who used it exclusively for the Sanskrit language and Hindu religious literature which was not open for study to all classes of people, whereas the Guru's teachings welcomed all people without any distinction of caste and creed, including the *malechhas* and the untouchables. Moreover, most of the people lived in the villages which had no facilities for the teaching of Devnagri, nor those living in rural seclusion and subsisting on agriculture, had the time and mental application required for learning this highly developed and intricate script. The Persian script was then taught in the *maktabs*, run in mosques by Muslim Mullahs for teaching the Quran and other Islamic literature, against which

there was the religious prejudice raised by the Brahmanical priests. And these Arabic-Persian schools also, like the Sanskrit *Pāthsālās*, were to be found in towns and cities far away from the reach of the village people. The Persian letters also, like the Devnagri did not correctly represent some of the sounds of Panjabi. Keeping in view the requirements of the Panjabi language, Guru Nanak had so modified the Sharda and Tankri letters, known as *Landé* or the tail-less, as to express the Panjabi sounds properly. The letter *æ* was added to the script to represent the sound between hard 'd' and 'r.' This sound is peculiar to the Panjabi language and has since been adopted by Devnagari by adding a dot at the bottom of *æ* and by Persian script by placing a small *toé* (t) on the top of its *ré* (r).

As tradition has it, the first biography of Guru Nanak was written during the time of Guru Angad and it greatly encouraged the use of the Gurmukhi script and helped develop the study of Panjabi language among all classes of people, including the Hindus and Muslims. The latter, however, mostly used the Persian script for it. Of late, particularly since the second quarter of the present century, there has developed a very healthy tendency among the Muslims of the Panjab also to learn and use the Gurmukhi script for their Panjabi writings. This has greatly added to the popularity of the Muslim writers as also to the appreciation of their style and idiom which, in fact, are more true representatives of the Panjabi language than those of many of the Indian writers who, not unoften, are guilty of hybridizing it with an over-dose of Sankrit. And, historically, it is giving a staggering blow to the work done for the growth and advancement of the Panjabi language by the early founding-fathers and its well wishers during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the present century.

The removal of caste and class prejudices preached by Guru Nanak received further impetus during the days of the third Nanak Guru Amardas (1552-74) who made it mandatory for all visitors to partake of the food served in the *Gurū kā Langar* before they had an interview with him. This was strictly observed and there was no relaxation in any case. Even the greatest of the great in the land, such as Emperor Akbar, and the high-caste Rajput Raja of Haripur of the Shivalak Hills had to observe it.

The social emancipation of women envisaged by the Great Master was an important item on his programme. He not only opposed the practice of *pardah*, the veiling of women, but also led a vigorous campaign against *Satī* or burning alive or self-immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. According to him :

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*Satīs* are not those who burn themselves on the funeral pyres.

*Satīs* are those, sayeth Nanak, who are dead (-like) with the shock of separation.

Those are also *Satīs* who lead a life of humility and chastity, and always serve their masters with full devotion. (*Suhi Var*, III, 622.)

With a view to maintaining the impact of Guru Nanak's mission in transforming the lives of his followers into ideal Sikhs, who had now spread throughout the length and breadth of India, the third Guru established as many as twenty-two centres under the direction of devoted and influential Sikhs. These centres came to be known as *manji* as their leaders, out of respect, were generally seated in their congregations on *charpais* or bedsteads, called *manji* in Panjabi. With the expansion of the missionary work and increase in the number of Sikhs and their congregations, fifty-two smaller centres, called *Pirha*, were attached to the *manjīs*. During the time of the fourth Guru Ram Das they all came to be known as *masand*, or persons occupying elevated seats. According to the *Dabistān* of Azur Sasāni (Maubid Zulfiqar) :

During the time of each *mahal*, or Guru, the Sikhs increased till in the reign of Guru Arjan Mall they became numerous, and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found.

...It should be known that in the reign of the Afghan kings, the nobles were addressed in writing as *Masnad-i-Ālī* or the High Seat. Subsequently by frequent use, the Indians have reduced the word to *masand*. And as the Sikhs consider the Gurus *Sachā Pād-shah*, that is, the true king, they call their agents *masand*. They call them *Romdas* (servants of God) also.

In the time of *mahāls* before the fifth *mahal* (or Guru Arjun), no *bhēt* (offerings) or tribute was collected from the Sikhs. Whatever was presented by the Sikhs themselves was accepted (and deemed enough). During his time, Arjun Mall deputed one person to the Sikhs of every city so that he might collect tribute and offerings from them.

People began to become Sikhs of the Guru through the medium of *masands*. The chief *masands*, through whom large numbers became Sikhs of the Guru, appointed deputies on their own behalf so that in every place and *mahal* (or parganah) people having at first become *mēli* (associates or pupils) of the *masand*, through the *masand's* agent, became the Sikhs of the Gurus.

The Sikhs have so decided that (the ascetic way of life of) an

*Udāsi* or renouncer of the world is not praise-worthy. Therefore, some of the Sikhs of the Guru do agricultural work and some trade and a multitude take up service.

Every year, according to the extent of money earned by them, they send (their dues) to the *masands* in the form of offerings. The *masands* do not touch them (that is, they do not appropriate any part of them to their own use). Other than this, whatever they bring during the year for the *masand* (himself), for conveying their *bhét* to the court of the Guru, is spent for himself, if the *masand* has no other means of livelihood. But if he himself is engaged in some business or profession, he never soils himself (by mis-appropriating to himself the offerings of the Sikhs). Collecting all (the offerings), he conveys them to the Guru.

In the month of Baisakh (April), when the sun is in the sign of Taurus, the *masands* assemble at the court of the Guru. Whoever from among the members of a *masand's* congregations wishes, and is able to undertake the journey, comes to the Guru with the *masand*. At the time of their departure (from the presence of the Guru), the Guru bestows a turban on each of the *masands*.

Guru Ram Das (Nanak IV, 1574-81) gave to the Sikhs a religious centre, a Jerusalem, a Mecca, of their own in the city of Amritsar founded by him in 1577. This lent to the Sikh organization a compactness and solidarity which were needed the most at this stage of its development. It was reserved for the fifth Guru Arjan (1581-1606) to give them a holy book, the *Granth Sāhib*, wherein he collected not only the writings of the founder-Guru Nanak and his successors, including himself, but also of a number of Hindu, Muslim and the so-called untouchable saints and sages of India, such as Sadhna, a Muslim butcher, Kabir, a weaver, and Ravidas, an untouchable cobbler. This was in keeping with the teachings of the first Guru Nanak who looked upon all Godly men as worthy of reverence. The scripture of the Sikhs, as such, may rightly be called the Bible of the people. The most remarkable thing about it is that it is written mostly in the spoken language of the people to whom the Masters delivered their message of devotion to God and service to humanity. In addition to its cosmopolitan character and outlook, it is the only scripture which has come down through the generations in its original form without the change of a single letter or a vowel sign. Its first manuscript is preserved in Gurdwara Sheesh-Mahal at Kartarpur in the Jullundur district.

To keep the Sikhs away from drifting into the Hindu ascetic ways

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of life, Guru Arjun encouraged them to follow the usual occupations of life. Worldly riches were no longer to be considered *māyā*. They could be helpful in the conduct of human affairs. 'For a religious man it was not unholy to get wealth, provided he spent and gave it in God's way, and lived in comfort.' The majority of Sikhs lived on agriculture and trade, and a number of them took up service. We have been told by Azur Sasani *Maubid* Zulfiqar, that they contributed liberally to the common fund known as *Gurū-kī-golak*. *Daswandh* or ten per cent. of the income was the minimum expected of a Sikh. This was in keeping with the teachings of Guru Nanak endorsed by Guru Arjan. (*Vār Sārang*, I-22; *Gujrī Vār*, V, 2-17; Bhai Gurdas *Vār*, 1-3.)

The increasing importance of Guru Arjun and the popularity of the Sikh teachings, both among the Hindus and Muslims, aroused great apprehensions in the mind of Emperor Jahangir. They were evidently excited by the advocates and agents of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Naqshbandi persuasion.

Disappointed with Emperor Akbar's policy of religious tolerance towards the non-Muslims, the Naqshbandi revivalists had won over Jahangir to assume the character of the defender of the Muslim faith and play the role of a puritan. As history knows it, Jahangir was not much of a puritan during his early life as a prince. Far from it. At times leaning towards Christianity, at others towards Hinduism, he was a man of confused religious views, with no fixed moral scruples, a debauchee, always soaked in wine. In his impatience to be crowned, he was suspected of having administered poison to his father in 1591. But the Emperor's constitution seemed to postpone indefinitely the close of his life. In 1601, he burst out in open rebellion and assumed the royal title and had his father's dearest friend and supporter, Shaikh Abul Fazl, murdered in 1602. This had afforded a very favourable opportunity to the Naqshbandi revivalists to extract from Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir, as a price for their support to his claim to the Imperial throne, the solemn oath binding him to stand as a defender of Islam against the inroads of *Kufr* or heathenism, as they called the non-Muslim religions.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was the head of the Naqshbandi *Silsilāh* in the Panjab and the north-west, and he was burning with rage against the propagation and spread of the Sikh teachings in his own diocese and under his very nose. The opportunity to pounce upon the head of the Sikh faith, Guru Arjun, came handy during the flight of Jahangir's rebellious son Prince Khusrau to the Panjab and his short stay of an hour or two at the Sikh town of Coindwal on the highway to Lahore.



It was reported to the pursuing Emperor, about a month after his arrival at Lahore and when the Prince had been captured, that the Guru had blessed the prince during his halt at Goindwal. This was all a concoction of the interested traducers of the Guru, but the Emperor was not in a mood to hold an enquiry and get at the truth. His mind had already been prejudiced against the Guru and he was only waiting for an opportunity to put an end to his preachings. This is evident from his own writing in his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, wherein he says :

“There lived at Goindwal on the bank of the river Biah (Beas) a Hindu named Arjun in the garb of a *Pīr* and *Shaikh*, so much so that he had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims, and he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him *Gurū*, and from all directions, fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.

“At last, during the days when Khusrau passed along this road, this insignificant fellow made up his mind to see him and conveyed preconceived things to him and made on his forehead a finger-mark in saffron which in Hindu terminology is called *Qashqā* (*teekā*) and is considered propitious. When this came to the ears of Our Majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and having handed over his houses, dwelling places, and children, to Murtza Khan [*Shaikh* Farid Bukhari] and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.” [Nawal Kishore edition, p. 35.]

In this statement Emperor Jahangir has levelled two charges against the Guru :

- (i) The popularity of the religious teachings and of the ways of the life of the Guru amongst the Hindus and Muslims who looked upon him as a religious leader.

This had so upset and irritated Jahangir as to use very undignified language for the Guru and his followers whom he calls simpletons, fools and stupid. This explains why he had in a hurry passed the death-sentence against Guru Arjan. His rebellious son had been finally dealt with and the Imperial crown of Delhi had been secured to him through the successful efforts of Shaikh Farid Bukhari, entitled Murtza Khan,

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a devoted disciple of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. He was, as such, under a deep debt of gratitude to the champions and leaders of the revivalists among the Muslim nobles on whose active support he had also to depend in future for the consolidation of his power. And since this was the first case of complaint against a non-Muslim religious leader through whose preachings Hindus and Muslims had been attracted to the teachings of Sikhism, and the field for Islamic proselytization was being reduced, Emperor Jahangir, to prove his fidelity to the oath of acting as a defender of Islam, had but to meet their wishes of doing away with the Guru. The execution of Guru Arjun was a most welcome news to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who, in his jubilation, wrote to Shaikh Farid Bukhari :

درین وقت کشتن کافرین گوئید و ال بیار خوب واقع شد و بابت حکمت عظیم بر خود مرود  
گفت بهر نیت که گشته باشند و بهر نفس که هلاک کرده خواری کفار خود نقد وقت اهل اسلام است. این خبر  
پیش از آن که این کفار را بکشند در خواب دیده بود که بلا شاه وقت که شکر است و الحی آن بر تریا  
اهل شرب خود را امام اهل کفر... عزت اسلام و اهل آن در خواری کفر و اهل کفر است. مقصود از اخذ جزیه خواری  
کفار و اهل انشان... چهار کفار و غفلت بر ایشان از غرور و ریاست دین است.  
(مکتوبات امام ربانی. دفتر حصه سوم، مکتوب ۳۱)

Translated into English this would read as :

The execution of the accursed *Kafir* of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intention they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, it is a meritorious act for the Muslims. Before this *Kafir* was killed, I had seen in a dream that the Emperor of the day had destroyed the crown of the head of *Shirk* or infidelity. It is true that this infidel was the chief of the infidels and a leader of the *Kāfirs*. ... The object of levying *Jezīyā* on them is to humiliate and insult the *Kāfirs*, and *jehād* against them and hostility towards them are the necessities of the Muhammadan faith. (*Maktubāt-i-Imām-i-Rabbānī*, I—iii, letter No. 193, pp. 95–6.)

This speaks volumes for the real cause of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan who, in the eyes of Shaikh Ahmad, was the chief of infidels—*Reis-i-ahl-i-shirk*—and a leader of the *Kāfirs*—*Imām-i-Ahl-i-Kufr*—for whose

humiliation and destruction he has, in his correspondence, repeatedly urged upon his devoted follower Shaikh Farid Murtaza Khan as the necessities of the Muhammadan faith, saying : *Jehād bil-kufr wa ghilzat bar ishān az zarūriyāt-i-dīn ast.* (*Maktūbāt-i-Imām-i-Rabbānī*, I, iii, No. 193.)

(ii) The second charge of blessing and anointing the rebel prince does not stand the test of historical scrutiny and had, evidently, been trumped up to excite the ire of the short-tempered Emperor to issue the orders of the Guru's execution all at once without making any enquiries about it. The Guru was not a politician to be in any way interested in the success of the prince's rebellion. As for the *qashqa* or *teeka*, never in the history of the Gurus there has been any occasion for any Guru to anoint any one, Sikh or non-Sikh. Even the succeeding Guru was never *teeka'd* by any Guru himself. This practice was followed by all the Gurus up to the time of the last Guru. Guru Arjun could not have departed from and gone against the accepted practice of his religion. All this has been discussed at some length in *Guru Arjun's Martyrdom Reinterpreted*, published by Guru Nanak Mission, Patiala, in 1969.

Guru Arjan's execution under the orders of Emperor Jahangir was the worst type of tyranny answering to the observations of Guru Nanak that "the age of Kali was like a sharp knife and the kings behaved like butchers; righteousness has taken to wings and fled; in the darkest of dark nights, the moon of truth is not to be seen—*Kal kātī rājē kāsāī, dharm pankh kar udriā, kūr amāvas, sach chandramā dīśē nāhī keh charhiā* (*Mājh Vār*, I, slok 16-1). The Emperor's *Tuzuk* tells us that the Great Mughal, in his fanatical high-handedness, had not only ordered the confiscation of the martyred Guru's residential houses and *dharmśālā* but had also ordered the imprisonment of his son and successor Guru Hargobind who was for some time incarcerated in the fort of Gwalior. This was a direct blow to destroy, root and branch, the whole organization of the Sikh church which he described as *dukān-i-bātil*, a shop of falsehood, and which he wished to demolish altogether.

Sikhism was purely a socio-religious movement aiming at peaceful emancipation of the people from ungodly prejudices and practices and at diverting them to the path of godliness, honest living and goodwill towards all, with enmity towards none. It had no hand in current politics. Nor had the Sikhs any strong political power at its back to act as a deterrent against Mughal persecutions. Themselves, they were peaceful law-abiding citizens with no means of protection and resistance against the

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aggressions of the then greatest empire of the world which had decided to smother the Sikh movement because it happened not to belong to the faith of the Emperor and his favourites. The only alternative, therefore, left to the new leader of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak, if he were to keep alive the church of Guru Nanak, was to so mould their outlook as to give due attention to the development of their physical strength along with spiritual attainments. Then alone, in due course of time, could he, he thought, transform his people into a new warrior type of saints, capable of defending themselves against tyrannical aggression without being aggressive themselves. And this idea worked wonders as subsequent history shows.

To begin with, Guru Hargobind (1606-45) himself wore two swords on the occasion of his accession at the Akal Takht at Amritsar as emblems of his spiritual and temporal position—*Piri* and *Miri*—the combination of *Degh* and *Tegh*—the kettle to supply food to the needy, and the sword to protect the weak and helpless. This was the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into a militant church. According to *Maubid Zulfiqar*, "The Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables, three hundred cavaliers, and sixty artillery-men were always in his service." This was the first corps of Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar. But as Emperor Jahangir found no hostile intentions in the changes introduced in the organization, there were no more harassments of the Guru. Perhaps, he had also come to know, not long afterwards, that Guru Arjan had been innocent and had suffered on account of wrongful reports made against him. After Jahangir's death, the Guru had to face occasional vexations from the Mughal officials during the reign of Shahjahan and he had to fight as many as four battles against them.

Guru Hargobind, however, was not exclusively a militarist. He was primarily a Guru, a teacher and a missionary of his faith. For this purpose, he undertook an extensive tour to the east and re-established at Nanakmata Bhai Almast whom the Gorakhpanti Naths had ousted from his *dharmsālā*. It was during this tour that he had met at Srinagar in Garhwal the great Maratha Saint *Sāmarth* Ram Das, of whom a mention was made in the beginning, and who had been deeply impressed by the transformation of the disciples of Guru Nanak into saint-soldiers.

Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru (1645-61), spent most of his time in preaching in the Jullundur Doab and the Malwa territory and deepened the impact of the Master-Guru's teachings on the minds of people. And

it is an undeniable fact of history that it was the result of this impact that the Sikhs of these areas not only stood by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur in their days of adversity but also acted as bulwark and shelter for their brothers-in-faith during the first half of the eighteenth century when the Khalsas were outlawed by Emperors Bahadur Shah (1707-12) and his successors, and were ordered to be killed at sight wherever found.

Guru Har Rai's son and successor Guru Har Krishan (1661-64) was followed by Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-75). Born in 1621, he was 43 when he became the Guru. Quiet and contemplative by nature, he was a man of an exceptionally cool mind, with a detached view of life, shunning lime-light. He, however, did not believe in taking to ascetic way of life. Living as a house-holder like his predecessors, he devoted his early life to the study of the holy scripture and became one with the teachings of Guru Nanak. On being called upon to shoulder the responsibility of the high office of Guruship, he undertook extensive tours in the country to keep the flame of Sikhism lighted up and to enthuse and strengthen the *Sangats* established by the previous Gurus. His visits to the Uttar Pradesh, Behar, Bengal and Assam are still commemorated in the large number of Sangats and Gurdwaras maintained at Allahabad, Benares, Patna, Dacca, Dhubri and other places.

While the Guru was in Assam, he seems to have received the news that, as a result of Emperor Aurangzeb's policy, the Hindus and Sikhs were passing through hard times. On April 8, 1669, says Saqi Musta'd Khan's *Maāsir-i-Ālmgīrī*, "His majesty, eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with utmost urgency put down the teachings and public practice of the religion of these mis-believers." (*Trans.* J. N. Sarkar, pp. 51-52; Urdu, *Trans.* p. 54.) This general order of the Emperor was having its effect. The Sikhs too, according to Khafi Khan, came in for their share; their temples were being destroyed and their leaders exterminated. (*Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, ii, 651-52.) Mirza Inayat-ullah 'Ismi' tells us in the *Ahkām-i-Ālmgīrī* that in compliance with the orders of the Emperor, and with the consent of the local *Qāzī*, the Sikh temple in the town of Buriya, in the *Parganah* of Khizrabad of the *Sarkār* of Sirhind, had been demolished and a mosque had been raised on its site.

With these developments, Guru Tegh Bahadur evidently felt that his place then was with his people at home and that he could not stay away

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while they were suffering under the inequities of the Government. He, therefore, rushed to the Panjab in 1671, leaving his family at Patna, and arrived at Anandpur in early 1672. He was anxious to do something which would shame the rulers into reason and rouse the people out of their lethargy.

He undertook an extensive tour of the Malwa and south-eastern Panjab, heartening the people and exhorting them to give up all fear and to face tyranny with resolute calmness, with full faith in God, as practised and preached by the previous Gurus. "Frighten not and fear not," said the Guru. He who tries to frighten other is a bully, and a bully is a coward who always keeps on shivering in his shoes. Guru Arjan had said, "He who vents his wrath on the weak and helpless is burnt in fire by the Almighty Lord. The Creator-Lord is All-justice and is the protector of his servants" (*Gurī V*, 167). And, in the words of Saint Kabir, "The oppressor is a tyrant and is ultimately answerable to God (for his misdeeds). Unable to face God, he is struck on the face" (*Slok 200*).

Wherever the Guru went, he was hailed as a champion of *dharma* and was visited by large numbers of people. It was in these days that the Islamization of the Pandits of Kashmir was being vigorously pursued by the Mughal governor of the valley. According to Bamezei's *A History of Kashmir*, p. 371, "Ifikhar Khan (1671-75 A.D.) tyrannized over the Brahmans to such an extent that they approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, at Anandpur in the Punjab and solicited his personal intervention with the Emperor." The deputationists chose as their spokesman one Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt, a Sarswat Brahman of Mattan, who had for sometime been a tutor to his young son Govind Singh. The receipt of the news of large number of people accompanying the Guru during his tour in the Malwa region and of his encouraging and sympathetic response to the appeal of the Brahmans of Kashmir was, evidently, the cause of great mental disturbance for the fanatic-minded officials of Emperor Aurangzeb. The Emperor was then at Hasan Abdal directing military operations against the Afghans. It was there that the proceedings of the Guru's talks with the Kashmir Brahmans and other accusations against him were reported to the Emperor who issued the orders for his arrest. Contemporary or near-contemporary records about the contents of the reports made to Aurangzeb by the Government officials and his intelligencers are not available to solve this tangled web. The histories of the reign of Emperor and of his immediate successors are almost all

silent on this topic. William Irvine tells us in his *Later Mughals* (i, 79, f.n.) that, according to Muhammad Ahsan Ijad, "Alamgir had issued the *farmān* for Tegh Bahadur's arrest but the order was kept secret. He was made prisoner by Dilawar Khan *faujdār* of Sirhind when encamped near Rupar, intending to proceed to Ganges to bathe. When brought to court, he refused to become a Muhammadan and was executed."

Unfortunately the Sikh sources of information on the subject are very unsatisfactory. Fact and fiction are so inextricably woven by hagiographical poets and epic writers into the details of the Guru's journey to and imprisonment at Delhi, and about his martyrdom there, that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get at the truth.

It is, however, an undeniable historical fact that Emperor Aurangzeb was not then at Delhi. He had left Delhi for Hasan Abdal on the north-western frontier of the Panjab on Muharram 11, 1085 al-Hijri (April 7, 1674), and had returned thereto on Muharram 22, 1087 al-Hijri (March 27, 1676), four and a half months after the Guru's martyrdom. (*Maāsir-i-Ālamgīrī*, Urdu, 88, 100, 104; English, 81-2, 91, 94.) Therefore, the account of the personal interviews of the Guru with Emperor Aurangzeb at this time at Delhi fall off as unhistorical interpolation. This, however, does not in any way belittle the significance and historicity of the great event of martyrdom for the sake of *dharma*—*Dharm hét sākā*—as Guru Gobind Singh has put it. Shorn of imaginary accretions, which had been a great deal responsible for the element of doubt about it, the story presents itself in clear historical perspective.

The report to the Emperor, evidently, complained of the Guru collecting large numbers of people around him and of espousing the cause of the Brahmans against the declared Imperial policy of converting them to Islam. To this was added that the Guru's disciples addressed him as *Sichā Pādshāh*, the True King, which was misinterpreted as an indication of his hostile political attitude towards the Mughal government. This was enough to excite the suspicious-natured Aurangzeb to issue an order to the Governor of Lahore for the Guru's arrest. He was arrested at Malikpur Ranghran by Mirza Nur Muhammad Khan *Kotwāl* of Ropar who sent him to *faujdār* Dilawar Khan of Sirhind where he was detained in prison, pending further orders from Lahore or Delhi.

According to William Irvine, "One of the Guru's crimes, in the Emperor's eyes, may have been the style of address adopted by his disciples, who had begun to call their leader *Sachā Pādshāh*, or the 'True

King.' This title was readily capable of a double interpretation; it might be applied as the occasion served in a spiritual or a literal sense. It was extremely likely to provoke the mistrust of a ruler even less suspicious by nature than Alamgir" (p.i.79).

The words *Sachā Pādshāh* used for Guru Tegh Bahadur as a title could not be interpreted in a literal sense. In truth, they had no such sense at all. They had not been used for the first time for Guru Tegh Bahadur. They had been in common use in Sikh theological parlance from the days of the earlier Gurus. Guru Arjan, the fifth-Guru, had used them in his *Slokas* for the great divine friend, the King of Kings, as *Sajjan Sachā Pādshāh, Sir Shāhān dē Shāh* (Slok V, 22). During the days of Guru Hargobind, we find in the *Dābistān-i-Mazāhib* that they were used for the Gurus also in the same sense as Satguru, True Teacher, the Great Master *Sikhān chūn Gurū hā rā Sachā Pādshāh yāni bādshāh-i-haqīqī midā-nand, gumāshdā-i-shān rā masnad mī-goind wa Ramdās niz mi-nāmand*-(p. 233).

But spiritual interpretation, which was the real and true interpretation, did not serve the occasion of the Guru's arrest. The words *Sachā Pādshāh*, therefore, were misinterpreted by the officials in literal sense to the Emperor saying that the Guru and his disciples had an evil eye upon his kingdom and that he should be rid of before he became a source of danger, and 'sallied forth in a hostile manner—*Kharūj namāyand*.'

The last clause occurs in the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* of Munshi Sayyed Ghulam Hussain Khan (1781-82) published in 1786. The translations of this work by M. Raymond (*Nota Manus*), pub 1789, 1902, and by John Briggs, 1832, have been extensively used by historians. But at times these translations run quite wide of the mark and have come to do great injustice to the subject they deal with. This is particularly the case with the account of the Sikhs where the author's anachronism has also conspired with the translations to worsen the situation.\*

On pages 84-85 of Vol. I, Raymond says that "Tygh-bahadyr, who was of such an extraordinary character as drew multitudes after him, all which as well as their leader went always armed. This man finding himself at the head of so many thousands of people, became aspiring." Briggs improves upon 'aspiring' and says "he aspired to sovereignty"

\* For Panjabi translation of the relevant portion of the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn*, see *Phulwāri*, Lahore, March-October, 1931; *Kuj ku Puratan Sikhi Itihasik Patre*, 1937, p. 41.



(p.74). The actual words of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* are :

سجادہ شریف ششم نانکے تہج بہادر نام داشت پیروان بسیار می رسانید و عداوت را گشت و چندی از کس بہرہ او میگرفتند۔

These may be translated as :

The eighth successor of Nanak named Tegh Bahadur, having collected many disciples (or followers) became a man of dignity (power or authority) and many thousand men moved along with him.

There is nothing in these words to say or to suggest that Guru Tegh Bahadur and 'all' his followers "went always armed" and that "he aspired to sovereignty." Evidently, it is only a fib of the translators' imagination and it knocks out the very basis of the allegation levelled against the Guru by later writers like Cunningham, Latif and others.

It is true that the bearing of arms had been introduced into the community during the days of Guru Hargobind (1606-45) as the first step towards the transformation of the Sikhs into a class of saintly warriors. The seventh Guru Har Rai (1645-61) had continued to maintain a corps of volunteers, but it came to be demobilized after his death, as his successor Guru Har Krishan (1661-64) was of too tender an age at the time of his accession. The ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur had neither the inclination nor any occasion to remobilize them on a regular permanent basis. For most of his time, he had been on long missionary tours in the eastern provinces and in the Malwa and Jangal territories of the Panjab where strong armed escorts were not found to be necessary, nor had any defensive or political necessity arisen to call for their assemblage.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, however, had not prohibited the carrying of arms, nor did he encourage the life of mendicancy amongst his followers as, under the impact of Gurus' teachings, they were men of the world, following the usual vocations of life and dedicated to the service of humanity. According to the *Travels of Guru Teg Bahdur and Guru Gobind Singh*, translated by Sardar Atar Singh, Chief of Bhadaur, published at Lahore in 1876, the Guru on one occasion bestowed five arrows upon a visitor (*Sakhis*, 14, 17). But there is nothing on record anywhere as having been done, directly or indirectly, by the Guru that could be interpreted as his "aspiring to sovereignty."

The author of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* introduces into the subject one Hafiz Adam, a *faqir* of the sect of the disciples of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, and says :

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...and he united his concerns with one Hafyz-aadem, a Musulman fakir, and one of those that styled themselves of Sheh-ahmed-serhind's fraternity. These two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes, implicitly addicted to their chief's will, than forsaking every honest calling, they fell a subsisting by plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of Pendjab; for whilst Tygh-bahadyr was levying contributions upon the Hindoos, Hafyz-aadem was doing the same upon the Mussulmen. (*Raymond*, i, 85.)

In addition to this being an exaggerated and wrongful translation of the text of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, it is historically untenable, as contradicted by facts. In the first place there could have been no combination between Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, living in the Panjab in 1674-5, and Hafiz Adam lying in his grave at Medina in far off Arabia since December 1643 (Shawwal 1053 al-Hijri). Shaikh Hafiz Adam had been ordered out of the country by Emperor Shahjahan on the recommendation of Sadullah Khan *Wazir* and he had left for Mecca. This was during the time of Guru Hargobind (1606-45) who was followed by two more Gurus Har Rai (1645-61) and Har Krishan (1661-64). Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-75) came to *gaddi* in 1664, twenty-one years after the death of Shaikh Hafiz Adam. This is borne out by innumerable works like *Rauzat-u-Qayumiā*, *Mirat-i-Jām-i-Jahān-numā*, *Tazkirāt-ul-Abidīn*, *Tazkirāh-i-Auliyā-i-Hind-o-Pākistān*, etc., etc.

The allegation of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* that, like Shaikh Hafiz Adam, Guru Tegh Bahadur had also taken to "the habit of taking money by force from the Hindus" is meaningless on the very face of it. The Guru travelled through the Malwa territory purely for missionary work and was not accompanied by any large permanent group of disciples. During his movement from one place to another, his disciples and admirers naturally turned out in large numbers to bid him farewell, while people from the next village came out in equally large numbers to receive him. This, apparently, was either misunderstood or misrepresented by interested reporters as large crowds. On his arrival at his destination, his disciples, as was the practice among the Sikhs, made voluntary offerings to him in cash and kind as a mark of respect for him. This practice is still followed by the faithful whenever they visit a congregation presided over by the Guru — the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. To use the words '*akhz-i-wajah ba-jabar-o-ta'addi*' for such voluntary offerings is very unfortunate, if not atrocious. It may also be mentioned here that the Guru never went out himself to collect from the Sikhs their *Daswandh* contributions to the community's common fund.

This was either done by the *masands* on behalf of the Guru (as mentioned in the *Dabistān*) and was paid to them by the Sikhs on their own accord, or was brought to the Guru by the Sikhs themselves during their visits to the Guru on the occasion of Baisakhi or otherwise.

There is not a word in the original text of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirin* to justify the translations by Raymond, and by John Briggs, who in most cases has only copied Raymond, that Guru Tegh Bahadur "forsaking every honest calling...fell a subsisting by plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of Pendjab." The addition of the words 'The other free booter' to 'Tygh Bahadyr' is exclusively Raymond's own, blindly copied by John Briggs without referring to the text which only says : *Tegh Bahādūr rā griftah muqaiyad o nuhbūs dār-and*. It may be safely inferred from the trend of his writing that the author of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirin* at the time of writing this was highly prejudiced against the Sikhs who had, during the sixties and seventies of the eighteenth century, liberated the whole of the province of the Panjab from the Mughals and the Durrani, for whom Sayyid Ghulam Hussian Khan naturally had a sympathetic political regard as his co-religionists. Guru Tegh Bahadur, otherwise, was purely a spiritual leader with a detached view of life, having no militarist tendencies or political intentions. The allegation that his movements in the country were a source of danger to the empire is, therefore, meaningless and stands contradicted.

Having been cleared of all the wrongful charges of political and criminal nature, trumped up against Guru Tegh Bahadur by interested officials or intelligencers, and by the translators of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirin*, his execution remains based on his sympathy with the Brahmans of Kashmir against the official policy for their conversion to Islam. Under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb issued to the governor of Lahore he was arrested by Nawab Dilawar Khan, *faujdar* of Sirhind, through Nur Muhammad Khan, *Kotwal* of Rupar, in July 1675. Over three months' time was taken in the exchange of communications between Sirhind, Delhi and Hasan Abdal where the Emperor was then busy making arrangements for the conduct of military operations against the Afghans. The final orders were received at Delhi, apparently, in the first week of November 1675.

To frighten the Guru into submission, three of his devoted Sikhs, Mati Das, Sati Das and Dīala were done to death before his very eyes. While Mati Das was bound between two pillars and was sawn in twain, and Dīala (Dial) Das was boiled to death in a cauldron of water, Sati

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Das was roasted alive with cotton wrapped round his body. But as no fear or favour, offered by the Mughal nobles, could prevail upon the Guru to renounce his faith and accept Islam, Muhammad Ahsan Ijad tells us, he was executed in the Chandni Chowk on November 11, 1675 (Maghar Sudi 5, 1732 Vikrami). Thus did Guru Tegh Bahadur lay down his life as a martyr at the altar of *dharmā* and, in the words of his son Guru Gobind Singh, he gave up his life but surrendered not the conviction of his heart. This was in keeping with spirit of the fifth Nanak Guru Arjan who had accepted to be tortured to death in defence of his faith and was the first martyr of the Sikh-panth.

Just as the martyrdom of Guru Arjan had given impetus to Guru Hargobind to leap forward towards the transformation of the Sikh people into a militant church, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur enthused the tenth Guru Gobind Singh to see it come to fruition.

The plan, as we have seen, had been chalked out and the ground prepared for it by Guru Nanak. It had been furrowed and cleared of its weeds by his three successors. Guru Arjan had watered it with his blood. The seed had been sown by Guru Hargobind. The crop had been protected by the seventh and eighth Gurus and was nourished by Guru Tegh Bahadur, again with his blood. Thus the Sikh community had passed through all the stages required for its growth to full stature. It was reserved for Guru Gobind Singh to give it the final shape. He not only freed it completely from the Brahmanical shackles of 'keep away and touch me not' caste and creed, but also placed all its members, including the Guru himself, on an equal level through the ceremony of *Khande dā Amrit*.

The teachings of his predecessors and the unique examples of martyrdom had, of course, elevated the spirits of the Sikhs. But the old shackles had not yet been completely broken. This had hindered the growth of a homogeneous well-knit class of people inspired by a common national ideal. In fact, the idea of nationalism had not yet been born in the country. The abolition of old differences and prejudices of high and low could only be brought about by a radical reformer as Guru Gobind Singh proved to be. The first thing to do, the Guru felt, was to change the psychology of the people. This he achieved by introducing a new form of baptism—*Khande dā Amrit*—which not only enjoined upon the baptized Sikhs to be called the *Khālsā of Wāhigurū* - the Lord's Own—with the common surname of *Singh* or lion, but also to maintain intact their original God-given form, with their hair unshorn, alongwith other symbols including *Kirpān* for self-defence and for the defence of the weak and helpless, and for the destruction of aggressive evil-doers—*gharib kī*

*rakhkhiā, jarwānē kī bhakhkhiā*, as declared by Guru Hargobind in his conversation with *Sāmarth* Ramdas.

"When Guru Govind Singh," says Edmond Candler, "inaugurated the sacrament of steel he proved himself a wise and far-sighted leader. For of all material things which genius has inspired with spiritual significance, steel is the truest and most uncompromising. Let humanitarians prate as they will, there never has been a race who have not been purged and refined by it. In some it is the only combater of grossness and the monster of self. To the Khalsa it gave a cause and welded them into a nation; and in the dark days of Muhammadan rule in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Sikh was slain at sight and no quarter was given, it drove them on those gallant crusades in which they rode to Amritsar in the dead of night, leapt into the sacred tank and out again, and galloped back through the enemies' lines purified. Hundreds were slain, but not one abjured his faith or perjured his soul to preserve his muddy vesture of decay." [The Mantle of the East, pp. 120-1.]

The *Amrit* ceremony in itself was a great socio-religious leveller. The novices coming together without any distinction of caste and creed were required to drink the sugared water, stirred with a double-edged sword, from one and the same vessel in a double round, the first man becoming the last in the second round.

But the most surprising thing in this ceremony came when Guru Gobind Singh begged of the first baptized-five, popularly known as *Panj-Pyārē*, that he might as well be baptized in the same form and manner. The initiation of a *Gurū* by his disciples was a thing unknown in the history of religions. Guru Gobind Singh, however, wished to be baptized as one of them, adopting the same form and wearing the same symbols as had been prescribed for the new dispensation. And, he offered to submit himself to the same discipline as had been laid down for the *Khalsa*. He was of the *Khalsa*, he said, and the *Khalsa* was the very breath of his life, nay, his very self. In complying with the wishes of the Master, the *Panj Pyārē* assumed the role of the *Gurū* and formally baptized him into the fold of the *Khalsa*, the *Singhs*. Well has this strange phenomenon been acclaimed by a contemporary poet Bhai Gurdass II :

*Waih pargateo mard agammrā waryām ikēlā*

*Wāh, wāh Gobind Singh, āpē Gur chēlā.*

And lo ! there appeared an unsurpassable man;

Wonderful, wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, a unique hero, a venerable preceptor as well as a humble disciple. (*Var* xli-17.)

This was not only a practical demonstration of the humility of the

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Guru's mind and of the equality between man and man as preached by the founder master, the first Guru Nanak, but also of the spirit of democratization in socio-religious institutions of the Sikhs, of which we have innumerable examples in the Guru and the post-Guru periods, particularly in the observance of the *Gurmatā* during the days of the Sikh *Misls*.

The institution of the Khalsa, it may be mentioned, neither aimed at nor did it in any way encourage exclusivism. It created a class of servants of the people, with greater cohesion among themselves, and with a distinct appearance, easily recognizable and readily approachable for service whenever and wherever needed. They had been enjoined to look upon not only the Hindus and Muslims of their own land or the Indians of all classes and states as equals, but also the foreigners—the Chinese, the Gurkhas, the Tibetans, the Afghans, the Arabs, the Persians, the two-coloured Frenchmen, the Farangis, etc., etc., in fact, the whole of mankind, as one—*Manush kī zāt sabhai ekai pahchānbo* [*Akāl Ustat*, 254-55]. Not only this. We have on record the brilliant example of a Sikh in the person of Bhai Kanhaiya serving water to both the friends and foes in one of the deadliest of battles and telling his questioners that to him the wounded and thirsty belonging to whatever side were all alike, deserving to be served with water to quench their thirst. It was a living demonstration of the observation of Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari who had written in 1695, during the days of Guru Gobind Singh, that, in addition to other qualities, stated earlier, "the Sikhs of the Guru lived in amity with their friends and without enmity with their foes—*bā dostān yak-rang, wa bā dushmanān be-jang zeest mī-kunanad*."

Yet another great example of the humility of Guru Gobind Singh's mind. Some of his devotees called him *avtar*, an incarnation of God, nay, God Himself. This was against the spirit and teachings of Sikhism which inculcated the Oneness of Self-existent, Unborn and Formless Creator. Therefore, with all the emphasis at his command, the Guru protested against this heretic blasphemy and declared in unmistakable terms :

*Je Ham ko paramesher uchar hai,  
Te Sabh nark-kund meh par hai.  
Mo ko dās tavan kā jāno,  
Ya meh bhéd nā ranch pachchāno.  
Main hon param-purkh ko dāsā  
Dékhan āyo jagat tamāsā.* (Bachittar Natak, vi, 32-3.)

Those who call me God, shall all fall in the pit of hell.  
Consider me a slave of His and have no doubt about it.

I am but a slave of the Lord, come to see the spectacle of the world.

Guru Gobind Singh had no selfish political aims in his creation of the *Khālsā*. He only wished to build up a nation out of the oppressed and suppressed people of his country. But the rulers of the time, the priest-ridden Hindu Hill Rajas of the Shivalaks and the power-mad great Mughal of Delhi, saw in the socio-religious integration of the Khalsa a danger to their vested interests and power. Of their own initiative and also under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb, the Hill Rajas and the *faujdār* of Sirhind launched a regular war against the Guru who had to fight as many as fourteen defensive battles against them. Two of his sons were killed fighting in the battle of Chamkaur, while the younger two, eight and six years old, were butchered to death at Sirhind in the Christmas week of 1705. True to the spirit of their grandfather and great-great-grandfather and of the teachings of their faith, the tender young children stood unshaken against the tyranny of Wazir Khan, *faujdār* of Sirhind. No threats of torture and no fear of death could frighten them, nor could the promises of a comfortable future allure them to abjure their faith. Bricked up alive and suffocated to unconsciousness, they resolutely refused to accept Islam and gladly accepted the butcher's knife with which they were slowly done to death.

But how great and unvengeful was Guru Gobind Singh that although he had been successful in as many as twelve battles out of fourteen, he occupied not an inch of the enemies' land, plundered not a village of theirs and carried not a man or a woman as a prisoner of war. And, he readily accepted the invitation of the dying Emperor Aurangzeb and set out for the Deccan to see him for peaceful negotiations to solve the problems of the struggling Panjab. After the death of the Emperor, he would not exploit the situation created by the war of succession among his sons, but like a soldier-saint, that he was, he stood for justice and lent a helping hand to the rightful heir Prince Muazzam Bahadur Shah against his usurping brother.

When once questioned why he had particularized the Muhammadan women for prohibition of sexual intercourse in the *rahit* of the Khalsa when he had already said that a Sikh should not go to the bed of another man's wife even in a dream, the Guru replied that as he wished to raise the Sikhs to a much higher level of moral conduct he had to caution them specifically against this misconduct so that they might not indulge in it even in rage and revenge against the Muslims who at times misbehaved towards Hindu women. (*Sūraj Parkash, Rutt 6, Ansā 20,*

No. 19.)\*

Towards the end of his life, Guru Gobind Singh felt that the mission of Guru Nanak's movement of Sikhism had come to be fulfilled with the establishment of the Khalsa and the finalization of the Sikh scripture with the incorporation of the compositions of the ninth Guru. He, therefore, decided to abolish the personal Guruship and to place the community under the guidance of Word-Master, the Holy Book, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. The personal Guruship had, in fact, come to be abolished on the Baisakhi Day of 1756 Vikrami, March 30, 1699, when the Guru had offered himself to be baptized as a *Khalsa* by his own disciples and had surrendered himself to the same discipline as had been prescribed for them. He had then become one with the Khalsa and the distinction between the 'Sikhs' and the 'Guru' had virtually disappeared. He was then Guru only in name. On his death-bed, he formally declared that there would be no personal *Gurū* for the future and that the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* would be the *Gurū* for all time to come. This was in keeping with the spirit of his predecessors, Nanak I to IX, who had all unequivocally held that the Word of the Gurus was the real Master, worthy of all reverence.

This democratic liberalization of religion, placing all authority in the hands of the *Khālsā*, with the Holy Book to guide them, influenced the life and conduct of the Sikh people who in days to come became the pioneers of freedom movements in India, establishing in the eighteenth century socialistic republics in the form of Sikh *Misals* and *panchā-yats* in the Panjab.

There was, however, a sharp change in the situation in the country brought about by the death of Guru Gobind Singh. He was attacked at Nanded by two Pathans from Sirhind and he died of the stab-wound there on October 7, 1708. The murderous attack on the Guru greatly shocked his disciples, particularly Banda Singh, who had come into their fold at Nanded in the first week of September. He was all fury to hear that during the reigns of Jahangir and Aurangzeb two of the Gurus and three devoted Sikhs had been done to death, while two young sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been bricked up alive and mercilessly butchered, in

\* ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੁਝੇ ਗੁਨਖਾਨੀ, ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੁਰਕ ਭੋਭੇ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਨੀ ।  
ਸਿਖ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੇ ਭਯਾ ਜਨਾਏ, ਕਿਉਂ ਗੁਰ ਬਾਸਤੁ ਬਰਜ ਹਟਾਏ ।  
ਸੁਨਿ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਬੋਲੇ ਤਿਸ ਬੇਰੇ, ਹਮ ਲੇ ਜਾਨੇ ਪੰਥ ਉਚੇਰੇ ।  
ਨਹੀਂ ਅਪੋਗਤਿ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੁਚਾਵੈ, ਯਾ ਤੇ ਕਲਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਹਟਾਵੈ ।

(ਸੁਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼, ਰੁਤ 6, ਅੰਸੂ 20, ਅੰਕ 19.)

ਹੋ ! ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਜ

ਭੁੱਲ ਸੁਯਨੇ ਹੂੰ ਨਾ ਜੋਯੇ— [ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ]



addition to hundreds of Sikhs killed in defensive battles. And, now, Guru Gobind Singh had also been killed by men from Sirhind. This tyranny and oppression, felt Banda Singh, was too much to be tolerated and allowed to continue. The Mughals, evidently, wished to put an end to the Sikh movement by terrorizing it with the flash of their sword. Godliness, religious catholicity and humanism had lost their meanings to them. Self-conceit and exclusiveness,—*Anā wa lā ghair-hu*—I and no one else—had become the only maxim of their power-mad lives. As they knew no language other than that of the cold steel, it was only in that language that they could be spoken to, thought Banda Singh. With the enthusiasm of a new convert, therefore, he set out for the Panjab, accompanied by five Singhs—*Panj Pyāre*—and some twenty other Singhs for his guidance and assistance.

Arriving in the Panjab, Banda Singh called upon *Srī Akāl-purkh jī kā* (*Wāhigurū jī kā*) *Khālsā* to repair to his presence fully armed to share in the glory of *Satjug* (the Golden Age of Independence and Happiness) sought to be established by him. He enjoined upon them all to observe the *rahit* (rules of conduct) of the *Khālsā*, as therein lay the grace of the Guru—*Tusī Srī Akāl-purkh jī kā Khālsā ho, . Khālsā dī rahit rehna, jo Khālsā dī rahit rehegā, tis dī Gurū bahurī karegā*. (*Hukam Nāme*, No. 66, 67, pp. 192-94.) This speaks for Banda Singh's spiritual *modus operandi* in his efforts for the deliverance of his people from under the oppressive yoke of the Mughal rulers and also for his reliance on divine grace for his success. In his heart of hearts, Banda Singh felt convinced that in the great task that he had undertaken, he had been called upon by the Almighty Deliverer Himself, and that he was only an instrument in His hands. He is reported by the royal news-writer to have said to his *Thane-dār* Amar Singh of Sultanpur that he was doing that all for the sake of *dharma*—

من این کار برای دھرم نموده ام

'*man in kār barāe dharam namūdāam*. (*Akhbār-i-Darbār-i-Muallā*, Jamādī 7, Bahadur Shahī 4, June 23, 1710.)

In November 1709, he gained his first important victory at Samana, the town of the executioners of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh's young sons. In May 1710, he was able to reduce the capital of the *faujdār* of Sirhind, Wazir Khan, who fell fighting in the battle of Chapper-Chiri. With this, the Khalsa, under the command of Banda Singh, was able to free practically the whole of the cis-Sutlej territory, opening the way for future successes in the field, resulting in the ultimate independence of the country in due course of time.

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The interested writers on the events of those days, mostly connected with the central and provincial governments, and others who have followed them blindly, have painted Banda Singh and his Sikh comrades in the darkest colours accusing them of anti-Muslim prejudices. This was not very un-natural. From their point of view, the Sikhs were rebels and were snatching away from them parts of their empire and freeing its people from their hold. And, there never has been in the world an autocrat who had willingly relinquished his power and has not levelled the wildest of charges against the rebels. But fortunately for Banda Singh, we have on record the unassailable evidence of the day-to-day reports made to the reigning Emperor by his own official news-writers through the *Akhbār-i-Darbār-i-Muallā*. Referring to the cause of the attack on Sirhind by Banda Singh, the Jaipur news-writer at the Imperial Court in his report written some days before the battle fought Chapper Chiri on May 12, 1710, tells us that the Sikhs under the command of Banda Singh had a deep-rooted hatred for its *faujdar* Wazir Khan 'for the murder of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh'—

بنویر خان کہ پیران خورد گوڑو گویند تگوراکتہ بود عدوت قلبی دارند -  
ازین جهت در مقام حال قلعہ وزیر خان تفرقہ راہ یافتہ -

Otherwise, Banda Singh had no hatred for the Muslims as such. In fact, after the occupation of Sirhind on May 14, 1710, the Sikhs, according to the same reporter, issued such strict orders as not to permit even the killing of a single animal —

در سہرند سکھان خالفہ مسلط شدند و تاکید می کنند کہ احدی جانور را نکشد -

It was reported to the Emperor on Jamadi-ul-āwwal 7, Bahadur Shahi 4, June 23, 1710, that the Sikh leader Banda Singh had pardoned Jan Muhammad, the *Zamīndār* of Gulab Nagar, for his previous offence and had appointed him the *Zamīndār* of the whole *parganah*. He had also called upon him to bring in Sardar Khan of Choondla after which he would accompany him (Banda Singh) for the chastisement of Jalal Khan Afghan.

گوڑو جان محمد زمیندار غلامنگہ را گفت کہ ترا زمیندار کل برگزیدہ نمودہ ایم و تعصیرت کہ کردہ پوری  
معاقت نمودیم - باید کہ با جمعیت خود رفتہ سردار خان زمیندار چونڈلہ را بیاورد - باز برای  
تنبیہ جلال خان ہمراہ خواہی شد

This is enough to show that Banda Singh had no anti-Muslim prejudice against anyone and welcomed their co-operation in the removal of

undesirable persons from positions of authority. This was in pronounced contrast with policy of the Mughal Emperors and their government who now looked upon the entire community of the Sikhs as enemies to be killed at sight.

On receipt of the news of the fall of Sirhind and several other places to Banda Singh, Emperor Bahadur Shah himself rushed to the Panjab, and on shawwal 29, 4th regnal year (1122 al-Hijri, December 10, 1710), from his camp in the neighbourhood of Lohgarh near Sadhaura, directed *Bakhshī-ul-Mumālīk* Mahabat Khan to issue edicts to the *faujdārs* in the neighbourhood of Shahjahanabad "to kill the worshippers of Nanak (the Sikhs) wherever they were found." The original entry reads as follows :

۲۹ شوال سہ ماہی  
بہ بخشہ المہاکمیا بہت خان بہادر فرمودند کہ حسب اہکم واللہ بنام فوجہ انان فوج  
شاہجہان آباد بنویسند کہ نانک پرستین را ہر جا کہ بیابند بہ قتل رسانند

The above edict for an indiscriminate and wholesale massacre of the Sikhs, however, brought no change in Banda Singh's attitude and policy towards the Muslims. Although himself pursued from place to place, he did not wish to reduce his struggle to the level of a communal strife. His was a political struggle. He would not, therefore, impose any religious restrictions upon the Muslims as such, and they flocked to him in large numbers. The following news-item is self-explanatory :

۲۱ ربیع الاول سہ ماہی  
بھگوتی داس برکارہ فرستہ معوضہ بہایت اللہ خان بموجہ خلی بنظر گزرانیدہ -  
نانک بہت مقیم و غایت ۱۹ شہر حال در قلعہ کلاں نور مقام دارد دین و لایقہ دادہ  
و بہد غودہ کہ مردم مسلمین را از اندیم چنانکہ ہر کس مسلمین رجوع می شوند نوید و خوب  
مقرر غودہ نگاہ می دارد و اجازت دادہ کہ خطبہ و نماز می خوانند چنانکہ ہر کس  
کس مسلمین جمع شدہ رفاعت بہت و اختیار نہادہ از نانک نماز در فوج مقیم و انرا لم بانست

"21st Rabi-ul-awwal, 5th regnal year (28 April, 1711) —

Bhagwati Das Harkarah, through Hidayatullah Khan, presented to His Majesty a news-sheet reporting that the wretched Nanak-worshipper (Banda Singh) has his camp in the town of Kalanaur up to the 19th instant. During this period he has promised and proclaimed : 'I do not oppress the Muslims.' Accordingly, for any Muslim, who approaches him, he fixes a daily allowance and wages, and looks after him. He has permitted them to recite *Khutbā* and *namāz*. As such, five thousand Muslims have gathered round him. Having entered into his friendship,

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they are free to shout their call—*bāṅ*—and say their prayers—*namāz*—in the army of the wretched (Sikhs).”

This is also mentioned in another news saying :

گورو مہویر در قصبہ کلانور آہو پایہ ادبار قائم نمودہ و از ہندو و مسلمان کرم برداری  
کند۔ قریب پنج ہزار سوار مسلمان جمع شدند و ہر روز افزوں میشوند باید بدیدہ خواستہ کردگار  
جیت۔

“The wretched Guru (Banda Singh), having established himself in the town of Kalanaur, is taking into his service any Hindu or Muslim who goes to him. Five thousand Muslim horsemen have gathered and are daily increasing. Let us see what God wishes.”

۱۳ ربیع الثانی ۱۰۸۰ ہجری  
مکتوبی داس ہرکارہ فرستہ و فی ہفت ہزار سوار مسلمان جمع شدند و ہر روز افزوں میشوند باید بدیدہ خواستہ کردگار  
جیت۔ گورو مہویر غایت ہم ربیع الثانی ۱۰۸۰ ہجری قصبہ شالہ آداسی دارد و ہم چندی مسلمان  
و فیہ ۵۰۰۰ سوار و پیادہ از طرف بستان جہون آہو رفیق گورو گردیدہ و ہر روز  
و مسلمان ہر روزی آید نگاہ داشتہ خوراک می دہد و گوشت کھانہ است۔  
مخود نمودہ کہ اگر افواج ہماید مقابلہ بکنند و اگر بیات طالبان نہ شدہ براہ نمی جنگل آہو شدہ بہ  
شاہجہان آباد ہر روز۔

“13th Rabi-us-Sāni, 5th regnal year (20 May, 1711)—

Bhagwati Das Harkarah, through Hidayatullah Khan, presented to His Majesty a news-sheet saying that the wretched Guru (Banda Singh) is encamped at two *kos* from the town of Batala up to the 9th Rabi-us Sani, 5th regnal year. Ram Chand and other Sikhs, with seven thousand horse and foot, have come from the direction of Jammu hills and have joined him. Whosoever from amongst the Hindus and Muslims comes to him for service is looked after and fed. He has granted the right of booty to them. It is decided that if the (Imperial) forces come, he will oppose them; if not, they (the Sikhs) move towards Ajmer, *via* Lakhi Jangal, and go to Shahjahanabad.”

These and other news-letters in the collection prove beyond doubt that the struggle of Banda Singh was directed only against the tyranny of the local Mughal officials in the Panjab and that their high-handedness was resented and opposed not only by the Sikhs and Hindus, but also by Muslims who joined the rebel Sikh army of Banda Singh in their thousands to fight against the Mughal Government. They further confirm that the Muslims in the Sikh camps enjoyed full religious liberty in the performance of their Islamic rites and practices such as the *namāz* (daily prayers) and *Khutbā* (religious sermons). The struggle had been launched

against the Mughal Government not because it was a Muslim Government but only because its officials were tyrannical and were hated by the people at large—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. It was, as such, a popular struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors and not of the Sikhs against the Muslims. It is true that the Mughal Emperor, the provincial governors, the *faujdārs* and other high officials were Muslims by faith and that the Imperial edicts of Bahadur Shah had been issued against the entire community of the Sikhs. But, according to the *Akhbārāt*, the Sikh leader Banda Singh was able to draw a distinct line between the tyrannical officials and the general mass of the Muslims who were as much the citizens of the country as the Sikhs themselves.

So deep was the impact of the Guru's teachings on Banda Singh and so devoted was he to Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh that he proclaimed to have received all his power and authority through their grace and issued his coins with the following inscription :

سکڑو بہرہ دود عالم تیغ نانک داہب است  
فتح گوہندنگہ شاہ شان فضل سچا صاحب است

By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two worlds :  
the sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons, and  
Victory is of Gobind Singh, the King of Kings.

He also introduced an official seal for state documents and letters patent. It contained the following inscription expressing his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to the Gurus :

عظمت نانک گورو ہم ظاہر و ہم باطن است  
پادشاہ دین و دنیا آپ سچا صاحب است

The greatness of Guru Nanak is visible as well as invisible;  
The king of the spiritual as well as the temporal world is the True  
Lord Himself.

This was later on changed to :

دیک تیک تیغ و نصرت بیدرتک  
ہافت نذر نانک گورو گوہند سنگ

The Kettle and the Sword—symbols of service and power—  
Victory and ready Patronage, have been obtained from Gurus  
Nanak-Gobind Singh.

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In addition to being a great soldier, Banda Singh was also a great political leveller and a thorough social reformer. Wherever he went, he raised the down-trodden to positions of authority and social prestige. William Irvine tells us on the authority of contemporary writers that :

"In all the parganas occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal of previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru (Banda Singh) when in a short space of time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders...Not a soul dared to disobey an order, and men, who had often risked themselves in battle-fields, became so cowed that they were afraid even to remonstrate."

(*Later Mughals*, i, 98-9.)

But the Mughal empire, with its inexhaustible resources in men and munitions of war, was too strong for the infant community of the Sikhs. Hearing of the successes of Banda Singh, Emperor Bahadur Shah rushed to the Panjab with a mammoth army, and the Sikhs were forced to vacate their conquests. After the death of Bahadur Shah, they were once again able to re-establish their power. But, they were not destined to be free for long. In the absence of strong positions of defence and with food and supplies running short, Banda Singh and his comrades were driven to last extremities, made prisoners and taken to Delhi. There, Emperor Farrukh Siyar ordered them all, 794, to be put to the sword at the rate of a hundred a day.

The carnage began on March 5, 1716, and continued for eight days.

An embassy of the East India Company consisting of John Surman, Edward Stephenson and Khoja Serhaud was then present in Delhi and had seen the massacre. Writing to the Hon'ble Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William, Calcutta, on March 10, 1716, they said :

...there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatized from this new formed religion.

(C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, Surman Embassy, Letter XII, pp. 120-21; A.T. Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, 180.)

According to the *Risālah-i-Sāhib Numā Chār Bāgh-i-Panjab*, the

Sikh captives welcomed death with undaunted spirit and with the name of God on their lips—*wāhigurū*, *wāhigurū goyān*—they presented their heads to the executioners with cheerful faces.

اں گرفتارانے غم خود گردن پیش جلا دیا می نہادند و دایوڑو دایوڑو  
جان می دادند

The impact of the Gurus' teachings and of the martyrdoms of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur is best illustrated in the fearless composure of mind, the peaceable calmness and the stoic self-control exhibited by Banda Singh during the last moments of his life. Under the orders of Emperor Farrukh Siyar issued on the morning of 29th Jamadi-us-Sani, 5 Farrukh Siyari, 1128 al-Hijri, June 9, 1716, to Ibrahim-ud-Din Khan, *Mir-i-Ātish* and Sarbrah Khan *Kotwāl*, Banda Singh, his young son, and his remaining Sikh companions were taken out of the Tripolia Jail in the Imperial fort, and were paraded through the streets of Delhi before they were taken to the *dargāh* of Khawaja Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki for execution. There, near the water *sabil* of Khoja Fattoo, the executioners at first hacked his son to pieces and thrust his quivering heart into the mouth of Banda Singh who remained unmoved completely resigned to the Will of God. Then came his own turn. First of all, he was deprived of his right eye and then of his left. Then his hands and feet were cut off, his flesh was torn with red hot pincers, and finally his head was chopped off. During all these tortures, Banda Singh remained calm and serene and, in the words of the Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone, he 'died with unshaken constancy, glorying in having been raised up by God to be a scourge to the iniquities and oppressions of the age.' (*History of India, The Hindu and Mahometan Periods*, p. 686.) Saiyid Ghulam Hussain Khan tells us in the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn*, seemingly on the authority of Muhammad Hashim Khan, popularly known as Khafi Khan, that while Banda Singh was being tortured to death, *Itmād-ud-Daulah* Muhammad Amin Khan was surprised at the nobleness of his features and addressed him saying : "It is surprising that one who shows so much acuteness in his features and so much of nobility in his conduct, should have been guilty of such horrors." With the greatest composure, he replied : "I will tell you, whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the path of equity and to abandon themselves to all kinds of excesses, then the Providence never fails to raise up a scourge like me to chastise a race so depraved; but when the measure of punishment is full, then he raises up men like you to bring him to punish-

ment." *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn*, 403; Raymond, I, 91; Briggs, 79-80; *Muntakhāb-ul-Lubāb*, ii, 766-67.)

Although the successes of Banda Singh were but temporary, there was a revolution effected in the minds of the Sikhs, of which history often fails to take notice. A will was created in the ordinary masses to resist tyranny and to live and die for a national cause. The example set by Banda Singh and his companions, under the impact of the lives and teachings of the Gurus, was to serve as a beacon light in the dark days to come. The idea of nation and a national state became a living aspiration, and although suppressed for a time by relentless persecution, it went on working underground like a smouldering fire and came out forty years later with a fuller effulgence, never to be suppressed again.

The history of the Sikhs, from the fall of Banda Singh in 1716 to the establishment of Sikh power in the Panjab in 1764-65, is a record of titanic struggle of the Khalsa against the Mughals and the Durranis. In it, the sons of the Land of the Five Rivers had not only to fight for their very existence but were also able, after long and determined suffering, to assert their right to rule over their home-land as independent sovereign people.

After the execution of Banda Singh the Mughal government took every measure not only to destroy the power of the Sikhs but also to extirpate the community as a whole. The edict of Emperor Bahadur Shah was repeated by Emperor Farrukh Siyar in almost the same words, says the *Miftah-ut-Tawarikh*, ordering that "the men of this sect wherever found may be unhesitatingly killed—*hār jā kih in firqā rā yaband, be-t' ammal bi-kushand*" (p. 398). Money reward was also offered for the head of every Sikh brought to Lahore, dead or alive. The death of Farrukh Siyar in September 1719 gave the Sikhs some respite. But with the appointment of Zakariya Khan Bahadur as governor of Lahore in 1726, the situation became worse than before. He seemed determined "to exterminate the whole nation of the Sikhs." He sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out, and in hundreds "they were daily brought in chains and executed in the streets of Lahore." They were tortured in different ways—broken on the wheel, flayed alive or cut up limb by limb. But nothing could deter them from their resolve. They were pledged to free their land from Mughal domination and nothing short of it could satisfy them. Driven from their homes and hearths, they had to seek shelter in jungles and deserts. There, they organized themselves into *Buddhā Dal* and *Tarunā Dal* for a 'win or die struggle.' The *Tarunā Dal* was soon sub-divided into five *jathās* to provide its energetic leaders with greater



opportunities of service and fewer of friction.

The activities of the Dals alarmed the government and they renewed their policy of persecution with much greater vigour, with thousands of Sikhs falling under the executioner's word, including a revered saint and scholar of the time, Bhai Mani Singh, who was hacked to pieces joint by joint at Lahore on June 24, 1734. The entry of the Sikhs into their temple and tank at Amritsar was banned and sentries were posted all round the city to watch out for them. But these oppression failed to subdue them. Every individual Sikh, wherever he was, considered himself to be a standard-bearer of the Khalsa and a proclamation of the existence of his people. Singly or in groups, they shot out with vengeance whenever they found an opportunity to visit their sacred temple. "Some performed their pilgrimage in secret, and in disguise, but in general, according to a contemporary Muhammedan author," says John Malcolm in his *Sketch of the Sikhs* (1812), "the Sikh horsemen were seen riding, at full gallop, towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners; but they used, on such occasions, to seek instead of avoiding the crown of martyrdom and the same authority states, that an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken in his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith" (p. 88).

The homeward return of King Nadir Shah of Iran from Delhi in May 1739, laden with the riches of the Mughal Empire, provided a very favourable chance to the Sikhs in the Shivalak Hills to relieve him of much of his booty. Surprised at this adventure, Nadir Shah enquired from Nawab Zakariya Khan about the people who had dared to rob the conqueror of Delhi. "They are a group of *faqirs* who visit their Guru's tank (at Amritsar) twice a year and bathing in it disappear," replied Zakariya Khan Bahadur. "But where do they live?" was the next question of Nadir Shah. "Their homes are the saddles of their horses," was the reply. "Beware of them, then," Nadir Shah warned Zakariya Khan, "the day is not distant when these rebels will raise their heads and take possession of their country." (Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zikar-i-Gurūn wa Ibtidā-i-Singhān*, etc., p. 13.) The prophecy of Nadir Shah came out to be true in a quarter of a century when the Sikhs became the masters of the country in 1764-65.

The remarks of Nadir Shah cut Zakariya Khan to the quick and he launched an all-out campaign against the Sikhs which continued with relentless vigour during the governorships of his sons Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan (1745-48) and of Nawab Muin-ul-Mulk, popularly known as Mir Mannoo (April 1748-November 1753). The son and succes-

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sor of Zakariya, Yahiya Khan, says Syed Muhammad Latif, in his *History of the Panjab*, ordered a thousand Sikhs brought in irons to Lahore by his minister Diwan Lakhpat Rai from the north-east of province to be executed at the *Nakhās Khānā*, later known as *Shahīdganj*. "The scene of execution is marked," continues Syed Latif, "by a samadh or shrine, erected in honour of Bhai Taru Singh, the chief martyr, and an old companion of Gobind Singh, who, though offered a pardon on condition of his renouncing his faith and consenting to have his long hair cut, persistently refused and was thereupon beheaded, 1746 A.D." (p. 218.) Under a proclamation of Yahiya Khan, "Death was to be the punishment of all persons who invoked the name of Guru Govind Singh and a reward was offered for the heads of Sikhs. . Thousands were put to death daily and their heads brought before the *subēdār* of Lahore for reward" (*ibid*).

The internecine quarrels between Yahiya and his brother Shah Nawaz, followed by the invasion of Ahmad Shah Durani of Afghanistan, gave the Sikhs a chance to emerge out of their hide-outs, take possession of Amritsar and raise in the neighbourhood of the sacred temple on the Baisakhi day of (March 29) 1748, a small enclosure of mud walls, called it *Rām Rāoni* after the name of Guru Ram Das. This was later on known as *Rāmgarh*.

But the Khalsa had yet to wade through a few more pools of their blood during the days of Mir Mannu before they emerged finally triumphant in their mission of liberation. Mir Mannu not only deputed his subordinates to round up the Sikhs in different parts of the country, but, at times, he himself also rode out for the hunt and brought in a large bag of the Sikhs. According to Syed Muhammad Latif, "hundreds of Sikhs were brought daily to Lahore and butchered at the *Nakhās* or *Shahīdganj*, outside the Delhi gate in sight of multitude of spectators." Finding the homes of the Sikhs depleted of men, their women and children were seized and taken to Lahore to be imprisoned in the dark and narrow dungeons in the compound of Shahidganj, where little babies were cut to pieces and placed in the laps of their mothers. So horrible and unforgettable were the atrocities perpetrated there that they are still remembered by the Sikhs in their prayer or *ardās*. But they failed to produce any adverse effect upon the Sikhs of those days who smiled them away in a song of bravado, saying :

*Mannu asādī dātrī, asīn Mannu dē soi,  
Jion Jion Mannu waddh-dā asīn doon sawaé hoé.*

that is,

Mannu is our sickle,  
And we are a crop for him to mow.  
The more he cuts us, the more we grow.

And this was literally true. The blood of Sikh martyrs helped raise a bumper crop of volunteers to join the ranks of the *Dal Khalsā* and die for the cause of *dharma*—the liberation of their motherland. After the death of Mir Mannu, the Sikhs had to fight against two powers—the Mughals to the south of the Sutlej and the Afghans to the north, where Ahmad Shah Durrani had established his sway. During one of his *shikars* of the Sikhs, on November 2, 1753, hunter Mannu was brought down by mightier hunter Death, having been dragged along the earth by his frightened horse. The leaders of the Dal Khalsa, then under the command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, foiled the attempts of Mughlani Begam, the widow of Mir Mannu, Khawaja Ubaidullah and Adina Beg Khan, to maintain themselves at Lahore, and drove away the Afghans from the Five Rivers. On February 5, 1762, the Sikhs were taken unawares by Ahmad Shah Durrani near the villages of Kup and Rahira and they lost over ten thousand lives, mostly women, children and old men. This fearful carnage is known as *Waddu Ghalūghārā*, the Great Holocaust. This, however, failed to depress them. It rather added to their determination and fury. In April-May, they were up in arms again and were able to inflict defeats upon Zain Khan of Sirhind, and upon the Shah himself at Amritsar in October of the same year. A big memorable victory, however, was gained by the Khalsa at Sirhind on January 14, 1764, the third anniversary of the Battle of Panipat, when Zain Khan was killed in the battle and the whole of the territory to the south of the Sutlej was freed from the Afghan domination.

In the winter of 1764, Ahmad Shah rushed upon the Panjab for the seventh time to re-establish his sway but had to return disappointed. The Sikhs had by then taken possession of most of the country. But the history of the Sikhs is grateful to Qazi Nur Muhammad of Gunjaba who had accompanied the Shah during this invasion and has left to us an account thereof in his *Jang Nāmāh*. With pen in hand and sword hanging by his side, he was present in all the Shah's engagements with the Sikhs and has recorded his own first-hand impressions of their character and fighting qualities. In his intense hatred for them as the opponents of the Afghan power in the Panjab, he uses all sorts of abusive language and calls them 'accursed infidels', 'dogs of Hell', etc. But, at the same time, he pays a glowing tribute to the Sikh spirit of self-sacrifice in the cause of their religion and religious places. As an eye-witness, he tells us :

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"When the Shah arrived at the Chakk (Amritsar and entered the Darbar Sahib premises on December 1, 1764) there was not a single *Kāfir* (Sikh) to be seen there. But a few of them had remained in an enclosure (the *bungā* of the *Akāl Takht*) so that they might spill their own blood. And they sacrificed their lives for the Guru. When they saw the renowned Shah and the army of Islam [numbering about thirty-six thousand] they all came out of the enclosure. They were only thirty in number. They had not a grain of fear in them. They had neither the fear of slaughter nor the dread of death.

نه کردند یک ذره ترس باک  
نه خوفی ز قتل و نه بیم از هلاک

*Na kardand yak zarrāh-i-tārs bāk*  
*Na khaufe zi qatl wa na beem az halāk.*

"Thus [unmindful of the overwhelming strength of the Shah's army] they grappled with the *Ghāzīs*, and in grappling they spilt their own blood. All of them were killed." (*Jang Nāmāh*, XXV, 48-55, p.100.)

Qazi Nur Muhammad was so deeply impressed by the lofty character and bravery of the Sikhs in their struggle for freedom that he has devoted a section of his book, No. XLI, pp. 156-59, to *Bayān-i-mardāngī-i-sagān waqt-i-jang-i-dīn wa mardāngī-i-eshān—The Bravery of the Dogs in a Religious war and in General*—wherein he says :

"Do not call the 'dogs' (the Sikhs) *Dogs*, because they are lions, and are courageous like lions in the field of battle. How can a hero, who roars like a lion in the field of battle, be called a *dog*? If you wish to learn the art of war, come face to face with them in the field. They will demonstrate it to you in such a way that one and all will praise them for it. If you wish to learn the science of war, O swordsman, learn from them how to face an enemy like a hero and to get safely out of an action. *Singh* is a title (a form of address for them). It is not justice to call them *dogs*. If you do not know the Hindustani language (I tell you that), the word *Singh* means a *lion*. Truly they are like lions in battle, and at the time of peace they surpass Hatim (in generosity).

"When they take the Indian sword in their hands, they overrun the country from Hind to Sind. Nobody then stands in opposition to them, however much strong he may be. When they manipulate the spear they shatter the ranks of the enemy, and when they raise the heads of their

spears into the sky, they would pierce even through the Caucasus. When they adjust the strings of their *Chāchī* bows and place in them the enemy-killing arrows and pull the strings to their ears, the body of the enemy begins to shiver with fear. When their battle-axe falls upon the armour of their opponents, that armour becomes their coffin.

"The body of every one of them is like the piece of a rock, and, in physical grandeur, every one of them is more than fifty persons. It is said that Bahram Gor killed wild asses and set the lions shrieking. But if Bahram were to come face to face with them, even he would bow before them.

"During a battle when they take their guns in their hands, they come jumping into the field of action, roaring like lions. They tear the chests of many and shed the blood of several (of their enemy) in the dust. It is said that the musket is a weapon of the ancient days. It, however, appears to be the creation of these dogs rather than of the great Socrates. Although there are so many of *tufangchis* (musketeers), but nobody can excel them in its use. To the right and to the left, and in front and towards the back, they go on firing regularly. If you do not believe in what I say, you may enquire of the brave swordsmen who would tell you more than myself and would praise them for their fighting. The fact that they grappled with thirty thousand heroes bears witness to my statement.

"If their armies take to flight, do not take it as an actual flight. It is a war-tactic of theirs. Beware, beware of them for a second time. The object of this trick is that when the furious enemy runs after them, he is separated from his main army and from his reinforcements. Then they turn back to face their pursuers and set fire even to water.

"Leaving aside their mode of fighting, hear you another point in which they excel all other fighting people. In no case would they slay a coward, nor would they put an obstacle in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or a maid-servant. There is no adultery amongst these dogs, nor are these mischievous people given to thieving. Whether a woman is young or old, they call her a *Buddhiya*. In the Indian language *Buddhiyā* means 'an old lady.' There is no thief at all amongst these dogs, nor is there any house-breaker born amongst these miscreants. They do not make friends with adulterers and house-breakers. ...

"If you are not conversant with their religion. I tell you that the Sikhs are the disciples of the *Gurū*, and that august *Gurū* lived at Chak (Amritsar). The ways and manners of these people received their impetus from Nanak who showed these Sikhs a separate path (taught them a new

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distinct religion). He was succeeded by Govind Singh. From him they received the title of *Singh*. They are not from amongst the Hindus. These miscreants have a separate religion of their own.

Any people could feel rightly proud of such a praise. But, as it comes from the bitterest enemy of the Sikhs, who had shattered for all time to come the hopes and ambitions of the Afghans to establish their political power in the Panjab, and of the writer himself to be appointed as the Qazi at Lahore, it enhances its historical value for the Sikhs a thousand times.

On April 10, 1765, the Khalsa celebrated the Baisakhi at the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, and there, by a *Gurmata* of the *Sarbat Khalsa* decided to march upon Lahore, the traditional capital of the Panjab. With the co-operation of some Muslim friends, the Sikh Sardars were successful in occupying the fort of Lahore on the night of April 16, and, on the morning of the 17th, the city was also occupied. Thus was the mission of the Khalsa fulfilled and the whole of the Panjab was liberated from under the foreign yoke, and her people heaved a sigh of relief. "With the coming in of the Singhs," says the author of the *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, "people felt extremely happy like birds and fowls freed from their cages, and the reign of peace and prosperity came to the whole of the country" (pp. 163-64).

In keeping with the Sikh spirit of service which they had inherited from their ancestors under the impact of the Gurus' teachings, and in acknowledgement of all their achievement as gifts from the Great Master, the Misaldar Sardars unanimously selected for their common coin the following inscription borrowed from the seal of Banda Singh and the coin of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia :

*Dēg O Tēgh O Fateh O Nusrat Bedirang  
Yāft az Nānak Gurū Gobind Singh.*

The same inscription was adopted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the coins of the integrated kingdom of the Panjab.

It is true that the leaders of the Sikh Misals in the course of their conquests and the consolidation of their political gains at times differed and quarrelled among themselves. There was nothing unnatural in this. Politics, not unoften, is the bane of goodwill and unity. But in their assemblies on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali held at Amritsar, in the precincts of the Darbar Sahib, in front of the Akal Takht, in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, they all buried their animosities and acted with one mind in the larger interests of the community; and the *gurmata's*, or the resolutions, passed therein were strictly adhered to in letter and

spirit. In the words of Lt.-Col. Malcolm in his *Sketch of the Sikhs*:

"When the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good; and actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion, and Commonwealth, to which he belongs."... The Chiefs say to each other : 'The sacred Granth is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes and to be united.'" (pp. 120, 122.)

It was here that the Khalsa met as the Guru's *sangat*, chalked out their future programmes, concerted measures for the defence of their country against the local tyrants and foreign aggressors and elected their common general leader for their future campaigns.

The institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat*, established by Guru Nanak, as mentioned earlier, had not only the levelling and equalising effect upon the Sikhs, but they had also strengthened their cohesion as a separate nationality and democratized their social, religious and political organizations. The organization of the Dal Khalsa and the republican nature of the Sikh *Misals* or confederacies during the eighteenth century also had their birth in the *sangats*. Sir George Campbell, who had seen this system in actual practice in the cis-Sutlej areas in the eighteen-forties before the annexation of the Panjab, tells us :

The Sikh system is very much like that out of which the German system sprang. They formed Misals or military confederacies...Each misal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chiefs, and every horseman had his rights and his share in the common conquests. The combined misals formed the 'Khalsa' or Sikh Commonwealth. (*Memoirs of My Indian Career*, 46)

Speaking of the republic of Mehraj, which he knew intimately, he says :

Mehraj remained an independent republic till, with the rest of the country, it came under British protection. ... It was really a very complete, fully equipped republic. ... It was diplomatically recognised as a state ... There were no chiefs or hereditary rulers; the state was governed by its *Punches* or representative elders. There was nothing of any feudal system, or any division into conquerors and conquered. ... Unhappily, as I think, this interesting republic was soon after wiped out, when all the smaller Sikh states were mediated and reduced to the position of British subjects (*Ibid.*, 42-3).

Even when Maharaja Ranjit Singh integrated and consolidated the

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territories of some of the misals into the kingdom of the Panjab, he said that the kingdom, in reality, belonged to the Guru and that he was only its *raptiā*, a *chaukidār*. And, always remembering the words of Guru Nanak "*bhullan andar Sabh ko, abhull Gurū Kartār*—Every one is fallible, the Supreme Creator alone is infallible," Maharaja Ranjit Singh never behaved like an infallible autocrat. We have on record, reproduced in facsimile in *The Real Ranjit Singh* by Fakir Syed Waheeduddin, two of the Maharaja's *farmāns*—and there might be many more which have not come to light as yet—wherein he had authorized Syed Faqir Nuruddin and Sardar Amir Singh of Lahore to withhold and bring to his notice for amendment any order of the Maharaja himself, of the princes royal, the Prime Minister or of the chief Sardars, if, in the opinion of the Syed or the Sardar, it was inappropriate. To quote, in English translation, one of them addressed to the Syed [pp. 31-32] :

Sincere Well wisher, Fakir Nuruddinji, May you be happy !

It is hereby decreed by His Highness with the utmost emphasis that no person in the city should practise high-handedness and oppression on the people. Indeed, if even His Highness himself should issue an inappropriate order against any resident of Lahore, it should be clearly brought to the notice of His Highness so that it may be amended. Protector of Bravery, Malwa Singh, should always be advised to dispense justice in accordance with legitimate right and without the slightest oppression and, further more, he should be advised to pass orders in consultation with the *Panches* and Judges of the city and in accordance with the *shastras* and Quran, as pertinent to the faith of the parties, for such is our pleasure. And should any person fail to act in accordance with your advice or instructions, you should send him a formal letter so that it may serve as a proof on the strength of which His Highness may punish him for disobedience. ...

Despatched from the court of His-Highness, 31st Bhadon, 1882 sambat [September 13, 1825 A.D.].

These were, perhaps, the only orders of its kind in the history of the world issued by a king authorizing subordinate officers of the state to withhold any order issued by the king himself which in the opinion of those officers appeared to them to be inappropriate and oppressive. The credit for this extreme humility in the interests of the people goes to the follower of Guru Nanak who had enjoined upon the kings to take a vow of dedication to impartial justice (*Sarang Vār I*, vii-2).

The Sikhs have also proved themselves to be no less formidable in



non-violent moral warfare. In 1922, in the Guru ka Bagh struggle, they took a solemn vow at the holy Akal Takht at Amritsar to offer *satyagraha* and under all circumstances to remain non-violent in word and deed. On the refusal of the Sikh volunteers to disperse under the orders of the police interfering with their religious liberty, their parties of 100 each were mercilessly beaten day by day and thrown into road-side ditches to be picked by medical relief parties. These non-violent soldiers included among them many a veteran of the Frontier campaigns and of the First Great World War. But not one of them raised his little finger against the police or uttered a word of complaint. The reports of eye-witnesses sent to the press from the place of occurrence stirred the conscience of the world. In the words of the Rev. C. F. Andrews, "a new heroism, learnt through suffering, has risen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world" by the followers of Guru Nanak.

At Jaito on February 21, 1924, the Sikh *Satyagrahis* literally ran into the jaws of death in the face of machine-gun fire and ultimately, came out successful in their twenty-two week long struggle against the Government.

In January 1922, after the success of the Sikhs in their non-violent struggle in the Golden Temple Keys affair, Mahatma Gandhi congratulated Baba Kharak Singh, the then President of the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, saying: "First Decisive Battle For India's Freedom Won. Congratulations." (*Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement, II.*)

"As regards non-violence, with its attendant conception of self-sacrifice," wrote Lala Lajpat Rai, "they have given the most amazing proofs at Nankana Sahib ... and later at Ajnala and Amritsar. They have proved themselves worthy descendants of their Gurus and the examples they have set of self-sacrifice and courage, devoid of swagger, in the face of provocation, will be hard to beat."

The above is a brief account of how the lives of the people came to be transformed under the impact of the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. They had, in fact, stirred the inner soul of the people and had freed them from the thralldom of the priestly classes. Freed from the worship of idols and images, they came to their own and introduced into the country a monotheistic casteless and classless society of manly servants of the people—an order of fearless saint-soldiers, the *Khālsā*—who, in their turn, made innumerable sacrifices to free their land from its tyrannous rulers and foreign usurpers. And, they ultimately succeeded in creating on the north-west an independent sovereign state of the Panjab and made a gift of it to India to serve as the guardian of her honour and independence.

## Nawab Kapur Singh\*

PROFESSOR HARBANS SINGH

The eighteenth century in the Punjab was a period of great political upheaval and turmoil. It witnessed a prolonged drama of constant war, foreign invasion and internal conflict. Four great powers—Mughals, Durranis, Marathas and Sikhs—participated in this relentless campaign. The clash produced conditions of utter chaos and anarchy. But order gradually evolved out of a completely desperate situation and the process took nearly a whole century to work itself out. For the Mughal authority in the land of the Five Rivers had begun showing signs of weakness soon after Aurangzeb's death in 1707 and the consequent perplexity and disorder continued until 1799—the year Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore and laid the foundations of a peaceful government.

A picturesque figure, who dominated the scene in the first half of the century and who by his unique suffering and heroism set in train an irrevocable course of events, was Nawab Kapur Singh. Nawab Kapur Singh was the founder of the *Dal Khalsa*. He was a brave and bold warrior and a natural leader of men. He welded his people into a strong nation inspired by a common will to survival and self-assertion and sustained them through a period of utmost strain and difficulty. He implanted in their minds the vision of a sovereign state and had provided in his own lifetime the basic ingredients of it. He was held in high reverence for his spirit of courage, self-sacrifice and religious devotion. When, in pursuance of peace, an offer of Nawabship and *jagir* came from the Mughal government, he was unanimously chosen for the title. He was then 36 years of age.

Nawab Kapur Singh was born of a Virk family of Jats in 1697. His native village was Kalo-ke in the Sheikhpura district. Later, when he took the village of Faizullapur, he renamed it Singhpura and started living there. For this reason he is also known to history as Kapur Singh Faizullapuria and the little principality he founded as Faizullapuria's or Singhpuria's state.

Kapur Singh was eleven years old when Guru Gobind Singh, the

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\**The Missionary* I, Oct.-Dec., 1959, pp. 61-68.

tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, left this mortal world; and nineteen when Banda Singh Bahadur was tortured to death in Delhi. He thus passed his early life in an atmosphere of high religious idealism. This was a crucial experience in those formative years.

Side by side with religious discipline, Kapur Singh practised manly exercises like any other youth of his time. His father had in his stables some very fine horses. Kapur Singh became an expert rider. His favourite sport was the practice of arms. One day he received a sharp sword thrust on his shoulder while at play. It had nearly proved fatal, but he made an unexpected recovery and survived.

Kapur Singh came into living touch with the new impulse then directing the energies of his community when he took baptism at a large gathering of Sikhs held at Amritsar in celebration of the Diwali. Bhai Mani Singh, a pious and learned Sikh, who had been Guru Gobind Singh's classmate in his school days and who had now been sent to Amritsar as head priest of the *Durbar Sahib* by the Guru's widow, Mata Sundariji, presided over the ceremony. Kapur Singh's youthful heart was fired with a new enthusiasm. His father, Dalip Singh, and brother, Dan Singh, were also among those who were baptized on that historic day.

Kapur Singh's physical courage and warlike spirit were valuable assets in those days of high adventure. He soon gained a position of eminence among his people then engaged in a desperate struggle against the government. In 1726, Zakriya Khan became the *Subedar* of Lahore. Under him the government's policy became more rigorous and repressive. Kapur Singh headed a band of warriors who, with a view to paralyzing the administration and obtaining food for their companions forced to seek shelter in the hills and forests, looted government treasures and caravans moving from one place to another. Every fresh oppression only strengthened their will to resistance and aroused them to war and revenge. Such was the effect of their depredations that the government was soon obliged to make peace with them.

In 1733, at the instance of Zakriya Khan, the Delhi government decided to withdraw all repressive measures against the Sikhs and make an offer of a grant to them. Subeg Singh, a Sikh resident of village Janbar, near Lahore, who was for a time *Kotwal* of the city under Mughal authority, was entrusted with the task of negotiating peace. He reached Amritsar where the Sikhs had been allowed to assemble and celebrate the festival of Baisakhi after many years and offered them on behalf of the government the title of *Nawab* and a *jagir* consisting of the *parganas* of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal. The *jagir* was worth a lakh of

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rupees annually.

After some mutual discussions the Khalsa accepted the offer. For the title of Nawab they had to choose someone—their organization functioned in a highly democratic manner and each one of them had a say in all matters of importance. Kapur Singh, who delighted in simple deeds of service when he was not fighting, was then trying to soften the rigours of a hot day by means of a hand-fan he was swinging over the assembly. All eyes centred on him and he was with one accord selected for the honour.

Kapur Singh was, naturally, reluctant, for he had never imagined such a thing happening. But he could not deny the unanimous will of the brotherhood. He, however, placed the robe of honour at the feet of five revered Sikhs—Bhai Hari Singh Hazuria, Baba Dip Singh Shahid, Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Bhai Karam Singh and Sardar Budh Singh, great-grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh—before putting it on. The dress included a shawl-turban, a jewelled plume, a pair of gold bangles, a necklace, a row of pearls, a brocade garment and a sword.

Nawab Kapur Singh looked magnificent in this accoutrement. But he never for a moment lost his native humility or simplicity of heart. The first request he made to his comrades after the investiture was that he should not be deprived of his old privilege of serving in the community kitchen.

Word was sent to the Sikhs passing their days in remote jungles and deserts that peace had been made with the government and that they could return to their homes. Nawab Kapur Singh undertook to consolidate the disintegrated fabric of Sikh organizations. The whole commonwealth of the Khalsa was formed into two sections—*Budha Dal*, the army of elders, and *Taruna Dal*, the army of the young. The former was entrusted with the task of looking after the holy places, preaching the Guru's word and baptizing the Sikhs. Nawab Kapur Singh was himself in charge of this section. The *Taruna Dal* was the more active division and its function was to fight in times of emergency.

Nawab Kapur Singh's personality was the common link between the two wings of the *Dal Khalsa*. He enjoyed universal respect for his high character. His word was followed with religious scrupulousness and it was considered an act of rare merit to receive the baptism at his hands. On his part, he always thought that his position among his brethren was due to their generosity rather than his own qualities. Once Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had the habit of mixing Urdu words with his Punjabi owing to some years spent in Delhi, complained to him that some of his companions had given him the nickname of *Hum-ko tum-ko*. "Why should you mind what the Khalsa say," said Kapur Singh, "for you do

not know their ways. In their kindness, they bestowed *Nawabship* upon me and might one day make a *Padshah* of you." Jassa Singh came to be known as *Padshah* from that day. The word became a title of endearment and authority when Jassa Singh, as leader of the *Dal Khalsa*, won sovereignty for it. He was proclaimed *Sultan-ul-Qaun* when the Sikhs occupied Lahore in 1761.

The *Taruna Dal* rapidly grew in strength and soon numbered more than 12,000. To ensure efficient control, Nawab Kapur Singh split it into five parts, each with a separate centre. The first batch was led by Baba Dip Singh Shahid, second by Karam Singh and Dharam Singh, third by Kahan Singh and Binod Singh of Goindwal, fourth by Dasaundha Singh of Kot Budha and fifth by Vir Singh and Jiwa Singh Ranghretas. Each batch had its own banner and drum and formed the nucleus of a separate political state, which in its later developed stage came to be known as the *Misl*. The territories conquered by these groups were entered in their respective papers at the Akal Takhat to avoid any conflict or confusion. From these documents or *misl*s, the principalities carved out by the *Jathas* came to be known as *Misl*s. Seven more groups formed later on and, towards the close of the century, there were altogether twelve *Misl*s ruling the Punjab between them.

In 1734, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had been brought up in Delhi by Mata Sundariji, passed into Nawab Kapur Singh's care. The promising youth imbibed from him religious discipline and martial skill and eventually succeeded his preceptor in the leadership of the *Dal Khalsa*—a tribute to his own uncommon ability as much as to the training he received at Nawab Kapur Singh's hands. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia dominated the latter half of the eighteenth century as Nawab Kapur Singh dominated the first. He founded the powerful *Misl* of the Ahluwalias, a remnant of which lasted into the present century in the form of the Princely state of Kapurthala.

The peace did not last long and before the harvest of 1735 the *Subedar* of Lahore sent a force and occupied the *Jagir*. The *Budha Dal* was driven away towards the Malwa by Lakhpat Rai, the Diwan of Lahore. It was made welcome by Ala Singh, the founder of the Phulkian *Misl*, who took the opportunity of receiving the baptism from Nawab Kapur Singh. The latter continued his missionary and military activities in the cis-Sutlej parts. Another important chief to take the baptism at his hands was Hamir Singh, an ancestor of the Faridkot House. During his sojourn in the Malwa, Nawab Kapur Singh conquered the territory of Sunam and made it over to Ala Singh. He also attacked Sirhind and

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defeated the governor of the place in a fierce action. Here the *Dal* got enough to 'pay their way back to Amritsar.'

As the winter came, Nawab Kapur Singh led the *Budha Dal* back to the Majha to celebrate the Diwali at Amritsar. But he was defeated by Diwan Lakhpat Rai's army near Amritsar and forced to turn away. The *Taruna Dal* hearing of this promptly came to his help. The combined force fell upon Diwan Lakhpat Rai before he had reached Lahore and inflicted upon him a severe defeat. The Diwan's nephew, Duni Chand, and two important *Faujders*, Jamal Khan and Tatar Khan, were killed in this battle.

Nawab Kapur Singh, who was now nearing forty, displayed great feats of swordsmanship and brought victory to the *Dal* by his superior strategy and courage.

The government pursued its policy of persecution with greater vigour and thoroughness. To cut off the Sikhs from the chief source of their inspiration, the Amritsar temple was taken possession of and guarded by the military to prevent them visiting it. Nawab Kapur Singh was the guiding spirit of the Sikhs now living in the Sivalik hills, Lakhi Jungle and the sandy deserts of Rajputana. To assert their right to a dip in the holy tank at Amritsar, he would occasionally send bold riders, who, in disguise or openly cutting their way through the army guards, would reach the temple, perform the ablutions and ride back with lightning speed on their fiery steeds. Many a heroic tale is recounted of such daring adventure, the most dramatic being that of Mahtab Singh of Mirankot.

The *Subedar* of Lahore, Zakriya Khan, so much dreaded the leader of the *Dal Khalsa* that he sent a strong force under the command of Samad Khan to seek him out. Samad Khan succeeded in engaging the *Budha Dal* in action. But he himself remained in the rear relying on his deputies to do the battle. If Nawab Kapur Singh wanted to measure swords with anyone, it was Samad Khan, for the latter was responsible for the torturous death of Bhai Mani Singh, head priest of the Amritsar temple. Failing to draw him out to an open contest, Nawab Kapur Singh had recourse to a stratagem. He divided his force into two sections. One he sent forward to face the enemy and the other he kept with himself. The first section started withdrawing itself after a little while. Samad Khan's army, thinking that it was in flight, ran up in pursuit. As soon as they left their ranks, Nawab Kapur Singh fell upon them from behind. The whole force was routed and Samad Khan was killed in the confusion that followed.

Nawab Kapur Singh also made a plan to capture Zakriya Khan.

With a force, 2,000 strong, dressed in green, their hair hanging loosely behind and a green Hydari flag leading them, he entered Lahore. He had been informed that Zakriya Khan would attend the prayers at the Shahi Mosque—their intelligence service was remarkably efficient for those difficult days. But Zakriya Khan's heart misgave him and he did not stir out that day. Nawab Kapur Singh was disappointed. Throwing off the disguise and shouting their usual war cries, his men marched out of Lahore and vanished into their forest homes.

The *Budha Dal* once again crossed the Sutlej and marched right up to the vicinity of Delhi. On the way, it triumphed over chieftains of Jajhar, Dadri, Dojana and Pataudi and received tribute from them. Overrunning Faridabad, Balabgarh and Gurgaon in the *pargana* of Delhi, the *Dal* returned to the village of Thikriwala in the Malwa.

In the early months of 1739, Nadir Shah was returning to Persia after a hearty plunder of Delhi and the Punjab. With a view to avoiding the heat of the plains, he kept close to the hills on the backward journey. The Khalsa *Dal* lay not far from the route he had taken. Nawab Kapur Singh thought it a good opportunity of punishing the invader and replenishing his own resources. When Nadir Shah reached Akhnur on the river Chenab, Nawab Kapur Singh swooped down upon the rearguard relieving him of much of his booty. On the third night, Nawab Kapur Singh made an even fiercer attack and rescued a number of innocent girls who were being abducted and restored them to their parents.

Nadir Shah was deeply annoyed and, as it is recorded, asked Zakriya Khan, "Who are these mischief-makers?" Zakriya replied, "They are a group of *Faqirs* who visit their Guru's tank twice a year, and bathing in it disappear." "Where do they live?" asked Nadir, "Their homes are their saddles," was the reply. "Then, take care," said Nadir, "for the day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of thy country."

For many a long mile, the Sikhs pursued Nadir Shah in this manner.

Zakriya Khan took Nadir's warning to heart and carried out his policy of oppression with redoubled zeal. Prices were offered for Sikhs' heads and a pitiless campaign was started to hunt them in the hideouts to which they had been driven. The use of the word *Gur* (molasses) was forbidden lest it should remind one of the word Guru.

In one assault, which is known in history as the first *Ghalughara*, or holocaust, nearly 10,000 Sikhs were killed. Even this dark period was illumined by the gallantry and sacrifice of innumerable fearless spirits. One Bota Singh Sandhu just to prove to the world that the Sikhs had not been annihilated stood in the most important highway in the Punjab,

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stick in hand, levying a tax on all passersby. Finding that everybody had been tamely submitting to his demand, he wrote a letter to the governor of Lahore, who sent a batch of troops against him. Bota Singh fell fighting valiantly.

Nawab Kapur Singh was now getting old. His spirit was, however, as unbending and undaunted as ever. When in March 1748, one section of the *Dal Khalsa* under Sardar Charat Singh, grandfather of Ranjit Singh, gave chase to the fleeing Ahmad Shah Abdali, the other at the instance of Nawab Kapur Singh decided to march towards Amritsar. Nawab Kapur Singh entrusted the command of this campaign to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Overcoming the resistance offered by Adeena Beg, the *Faujdar* of Jullundur, the army moved on to Amritsar, where Salabat Khan, with his troops, was ready to check their entry. A quick battle took place. Salabat Khan and his nephew, Nijabat Khan, attacked Sardar Jassa Singh, who with a heavy blow of his sword cut the former in twain. Nijabat Khan was going to attack him with his spear when Nawab Kapur Singh suddenly struck him down with an arrow.

At last, the Sikhs celebrated the Baisakhi (March 29, 1748) at Amritsar after a long interval. Nawab Kapur Singh on this occasion begged the Khalsa to relieve him of his office. At his suggestion, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was chosen the supreme commander of the *Dal Khalsa*.

For twenty-two years, Nawab Kapur Singh had guided the destinies of his people through most arduous and difficult times. Few men ever had to contend with heavier odds; few ever engaged in such an unequal fight. Yet, striving valiantly against strenuous circumstances, he step by step built up the sovereignty of the Khalsa and, by the time he retired, he had conferred on the Dal the lineaments of an independent state. What is most remarkable is that, in the midst of life-long preoccupation with war and fighting, he maintained an irreproachable ethical standard and was universally esteemed for his nobility of character and devoutly religious spirit.

There was of course no rest or retirement for the noble warrior. When in December 1748, Ahmed Shah Abdali again invaded the Punjab, Nawab Kapur Singh, in the confusion that prevailed, entered the city of Lahore at the head of twenty horsemen. He appropriated unto himself the authority of *Kotwal*, ordered the release of some prisoners and returned with much needed ammunition and gold for the Dal.

Nawab Kapur Singh died in 1753. He was cremated at Amritsar near Gurdwara Baba Atal Sahib.



## The Misaldari Period of Sikh History\*

DR FAUJA SINGH

The year 1765 marks the beginning of a new epoch in Sikh History, for in this year the Sikhs brought their nearly 50-year long relentless struggle against the formidable might of the Mughals and the Afghans to a successful conclusion and embarked upon a career of conquest and consolidation of power. Energetic and daring as they were, they rapidly spread themselves in different directions and in the course of a few years became the masters of the Panjab. The new political order which thus came into being, is known as *Misaldari*, probably from the *Misals* (files) in which particulars of the newly set-up principalities were recorded. This order continued right till the end of the century when Ranjit Singh, one of the *Misaldars*, set himself to the arduous task of welding the discordant *misals* into a united whole.

While the *misals* must be given credit for the celerity and success with which they carved out their respective principalities after 1765, as also for the resolute determination with which, at times, they conducted their defence against foreign invaders, the 35 years of the *Misaldari* period are noted more for the failure of the Sikh chiefs who held the reins of power than for their achievements.

The scramble for land, which followed their triumph over the Durranis accentuated by the sense of security emanating from the near-absence of external danger, generated an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, distrust and rivalry among the chiefs. The over-riding and all-embracing spirit of self-sacrifice, born of complete devotion to the Guru and the common cause, which had led them to success and power, was now almost gone. Their character was still marked by the qualities of hardihood, courage and endurance which evoked admiration from foreign observers like Col. Polier, but their general outlook had undergone a radical change. The unity of purpose and action which had marked the preceding period of struggle was conspicuously absent. In this way, verily a state of affairs emerged in which every chief acted on the motto : Every one for himself and Devil take the hindmost.

Consequently, a mortal blow was dealt to the valuable institutions

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\**The Missionary*, Jan.-March, 1960, pp. 42-46.

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of bi-annual meetings of the *Sarbat Khalsa* (community in general) at Amritsar to ponder over matters of vital common interest, registration of decisions through resolutions passed in the midst of *Jaikaras* (loud shouts) of *Sat Sri Akal* or *Gurmattas* as they were called, and election of an over-all leader of the community for the coming year, institutions which had taken birth and proved useful during the hard days of the struggle for survival both as a bond of unity and a political instrument to conduct the fight against the heavy odds of the enemy. One could expect that after having made such a successful use of this instrument, the Sikhs would develop it further so as to consolidate their power and lay down the foundations of a bright and prosperous future. The equalitarian character of their community also held out a promise of setting up a new type of polity based on the idea of commonwealth which had already become a living reality among the Sikhs. However, none of these expectations ever came within the range of realisation, as the separatist and individualistic tendencies of the *misals* got the better of them and undermined the forces of integration and unification, so that in the end we find neither any organised political system nor any one or a set of republics. One searches in vain for any evidence of eagerness on the part of the *Misaldari* chiefs to raise an edifice on the foundations laid earlier and deeply regrets this phenomenon, particularly because the principal actors on the political stage of this period were practically the same as had striven hard to win the titanic struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans. It was the failure of the republican institutions of the Sikhs during the *Misaldari* period, which, more than anything else, was responsible for the adaptation, in the time of Ranjit Singh, of the centuries-old routine system of monarchy functioning in alliance with Jagirdari system. It is also worth remembering that the first steps in the establishment of the Jagirdari system, subsequently developed by Ranjit Singh, were taken during the rule of the *Misaldars*.

In the absence of a central body or a common forum which, besides imparting cohesion to their ranks, could have been a valuable clearing house for misunderstandings and grievances, the mutual relations of the various chiefs suffered an irretrievable damage. They were stuck up in petty internecine warfare which was occasionally aggravated by invitations by some of them for foreign intervention. There was little cooperation among them beyond a vague understanding that each one would be free within his own territorial limits and beyond an occasional concerted action in the conquest of a few of the Muslim chiefs of central and western Panjab, except in very grave emergencies when they were driven

to it by ties of a common religion and requirements of joint defence, as in the case of invasions by Zaman Shah, Majd-ud Daula, Mirza Shafi, Nana Rao and George Thomas. Even on such occasions as these, their unity was far from complete. Moreover, there were certain important exceptions as well. On the occasions of Amba ji Ingle, Rane Khan and Perrons' marches upon the Panjab in 1787, 1790 and 1799, respectively, not even the gravity of the situation could unite them, with the result that a great many of them were humiliated and made to pay tributes. Under the circumstances, there could not be among them many alliances, political or military. A few of them that come to our notice, were inspired by personal factors as jealousy, desire for vengeance and self-aggrandisement rather than the larger interests of the community and were generally of a transient and shifting nature.

Being a house divided against itself, it was but natural that the Sikh Chiefs should fail to avail themselves of the vast opportunities that lay before them. At this time, India was in a state of disintegration and decay. The Mughal empire had collapsed or was paralysed. The Marathas also were nearly a spent force. The English were yet far away, slowly rising into prominence in the east. Others like Rohillas, Jats, Rajputs and the Nawab of Oudh had a measure of hold in northern India, but they were all weak, disunited and declining. To make matters worse, they were all at war with one another. On top of all this, each one of them suffered from internal dissensions. There was, therefore, an utter chaos in Northern India. In the words of a contemporary English officer, "the country was torn to pieces by civil wars and groaned under every species of domestic confusion." All this presented to the Sikhs a very favourable situation which was made all the more so by the absence, over the larger part of this period, of any serious threat of invasion from the side of Kabul. Ahmed Shah Durrani had died in 1772 and his successor, Timur Shah, was too much engrossed in his domestic problems to spare any attention for India. And the menace of Zaman Shah's invasions did not assume serious proportions until very near the close of the century. Any strong, determined, enterprising and imaginative people could have made the utmost of such a situation. The Sikhs were not wholly lacking in these qualities, but unfortunately they were absorbed in unconstructive channels. They had obviously an excellent chance to secure the hegemony of Northern India, but owing to their incapacity to organise, their propensity to submit to no higher authority and their not infrequent involvement in petty warfare among themselves, they could not properly use it and succeeded only in making a plundering preserve of what could

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easily have been made their dominion.

They had started well and had had a number of achievements to their credit in the early part of the period. They had made many conquests in all parts of the Panjab, had successfully defied the attempts of the Mughals at their subjugation and their repeated inroads into the Imperial dominions of Karnal, Panipat and the Gangetic Doab, had completely paralysed the Mughal power by 1781. Between the death of Najaf Khan, the last strong man of Delhi, in April 1782, and the appointment of Mahadji Sindhia as *Vakil Mutliq* of Shah Alam II in December 1784, the empire lay prostrate at their feet. Here was an excellent opportunity for them to acquire a dominating position in the empire, but they failed to turn it to their advantage and wasted it away by using it only for levying more *rakhi* (protection money). Shah Alam II was at this time surely in need of friends and was making efforts on all sides like a drowning man trying to catch at a straw. What the Marathas were able to do later on in 1784, could have been done by the Sikhs as well. They had rather better chances, being closer to Delhi than the Marathas. Moreover, up to 1782, the Marathas and the English were engaged in mutual hostilities. The Sikhs realised their blunder only after the Marathas had entered into an alliance with the Emperor and had revitalised the defences of the empire. But it was now too late. All the same, they tried to make amends by wooing the British and approached them on several occasions but in vain, as the British, though anxious to keep friendly relations with the Sikhs as a sort of counterweight to the Maratha-Emperor alliance, were not prepared to enter into any definite commitments with them. The result was that all their endeavours came to nought and the fight with the empire had to be restarted with the added disadvantage that its new defenders, the Marathas, were much stronger foes. In the resumed fight, the Marathas used the twin methods conciliation and coercion to bring the Sikhs into submission but the latter could be neither suppressed nor won over by liberal terms. However, the prolonged struggle with the Marathas destroyed all chances of the Sikhs becoming masters of the empire. Round the corner of the century, the place of the Marathas was taken by the British who, after vanquishing the latter in the second Anglo-Marathas war, had annexed the whole belt of territory up to the very banks of the Jumna. The Sikhs now lost all their *rakhi* lands and were in a state of helplessness, as they were no match for the better-organised and better-disciplined army or superior diplomacy of the English. But for this state of affairs they were to thank but themselves, for it was very largely their own divided ranks and bankruptcy of competent leadership

that had led to this result. Ultimately, perhaps, like all other Indian powers, they were bound to fall prey to the British, but had they been united and been expert in the art of higher strategy, the course of history might have been different.

The Misaldari custom of independence and freedom of enterprise for every chief was not, however, without some advantages. It played a vital role in the territorial expansion of the Sikhs. The chiefs, severally or in small convenient combinations, swept over the whole of the Punjab in all directions. The whole task was accomplished in an astonishingly short time. This was rendered possible because the powers that had to be contended with, were small chieftainships with very limited resources, and at logger-heads with one another. In defence also, the system showed great utility. It made them irrepressible like the Marathas who had fought against Aurangzeb in the last two decades of his reign and whom the emperor with all his resources had found it impossible to subdue. The Afghans, the Mughals and the Marathas all tried by turns to crush the Sikhs but they all failed, for the reason that there were far too many chiefs to be dealt with and the defeat of a single chief did not carry much weight. In such an organization, there is no one central or vital point where a blow can be struck with effect. But the fact that there were certain advantages in this system should create no misleading impression, for its disadvantages far outweighed its advantages. As a matter of fact, it suffered from great limitations and was productive of greater harm than good to the Sikhs.

## First Indian Campaign to Conquer Tibet\*

DR KIRPAL SINGH

The Punjab of the first half of the 19th century offers pageants of military exploits which every Indian can be well proud of. It presents unique events when ever-gushing stream of the constant invasions from the North West was rolled back. The Sikhs erected a bulwark of defence against foreign aggression, the tide of which had run its prosperous course for the preceeding eight hundred years. New leaves were turned in the history of military exploits. The conquest of Tibet, the abode of snow, was attempted for the first time during this period. This hazardous campaign was undertaken during the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh (1841-1843 A.D.), the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, by his feudatory, Raja Gulab Singh and his General Zorawar Singh.

Zorawar Singh or Wazir Zorawar Kalhoria or 'Zorawaroo', as Major G. Carmichael Smyth calls him, belonged to village Kussal near the fortress of Reasi (in the hills beyond Jammu) where he first joined service as a soldier. The *Killadar* finding him intelligent used to send him for carrying messages to his master at Jammu. Raja Gulab Singh was greatly impressed by the messenger who once told him that he could make better arrangement of distribution of food to the soldiers and hence effect economy in the finances of the states. The Jammu Chief was so impressed by his arguments that he appointed him inspector of commissariat in all the forts North of Jammu. By saving about one lac of rupees he won the favour of his master who raised him from one appointment to another until he became the governor of the territory of Kussal and Khistwar. Zorawar Singh was extremely devoted to his master and he wore no clothes except those sent by his master. He had never drawn any pay—even his wife and children were left dependent on his master for their daily subsistence. As governor he proved a very good administrator and finally he was appointed as *Wazir* with full powers to levy and direct forces as he pleased for the conquests of the independent states around.

Zorawar Singh proved to be a conqueror of undying fame. He

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\* *The Missionary* (16), Summer, 1963, pp. 65-67.

organised successful expeditions for the conquest of Ladakh, Iskardo and Little Tibet. His last expedition was for the conquest of Central Tibet.

### **Conquest of Tibet**

No Indian ruler had ever thought of conquering Tibet before as no Indian general accustomed to the heat of the plains had ever dared to face the rigours of the Tibetan climate. Zorawar Singh conceived the idea of conquering the central Tibetan province for his master and prepared an expedition for that purpose.

In May 1841, Zorawar Singh collected his forces for the conquest of Tibet at Leh, the capital of Ladakh. After leaving some reserve force there he moved along the bank of the Indus. Within a few days his army reached the plains of Rodokh where the Tartars used to dig gold. Here Zorawar Singh was lured by the temptation of gold. Instead of going ahead speedily for his object of conquest he wasted time in search of gold with the result that he was able to collect almost two seers and a half of that precious metal. It has been rightly stated that "the price of this gold was the destruction of Zoroveroo and his army," as it considerably delayed his return before the approach of winter. Moreover, this delay enabled the enemy to prepare resistance to the invading army.

### **Expedition Proves Disastrous**

Zorawar Singh had not expected any serious attempt to resist his army during the winter. But his calculations proved wrong. It was in November when the cold of Tibet had already become unbearable that he heard that Lhasa force was approaching to meet him. A small force which Zorawar Singh sent to oppose the enemy and to find out their strength was cut to pieces by the Tibetans. A second force which was sent under Ghulam Khan met with no better fate. Retreat through the snows was impossible and the enemy forces were more than double in number. He was left with no option except to fight. The battle commenced on the 10th December and continued for three days. On the 12th December Zorawar Singh was wounded by a bullet. But he continued to fight until a Tibetan warrior pierced him through the breast with his lance. Zorawar Singh and his five hundred soldiers were slain and thus almost his whole army was dispersed with great slaughter. Only a miserable remnant of force, which found their way through the hills into the British territory by the way of Almora, returned to Jammu to tell the tale of their woe.

Alexander Cunningham, who was later on sent by common agreement by Raja Gulab Singh and the English Company, to fix boundary

#### FIRST INDIAN CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER TIBET

between Ladakh and Tibet, writes :

“The Indian soldiers of Zorawar Singh fought under very great disadvantage. The battle field was upward of 15,000 feet above the sea and the time mid winter, when even during the day, the temperature never rises above freezing point and the intense cold of the night can only be borne by people well covered with sheep skins and surrounded by fires. For several nights the Indian troops had been exposed to all the bitterness of the climate. Many had lost the use of their fingers and toes; and all were more or less frost bitten on the last fatal day and not one half of the men could handle arms.”



# Agricultural Labourers of the Punjab During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

HIMADRI BANERJEE\*

## I. Agricultural labourers : an old question reopened

The nature and extent of changes in the agrarian society of India during British rule has been examined by different scholars over the years. Of such changes that have probably attracted frequent attention is the emergence of a distinct class of agricultural labourers in different parts of the British Empire. These scholars pointed out that the pre-British Indian economy did not always recognise the presence of a sizable number of agricultural labourers. It is also argued that under British rule, as a result of growing indebtedness of the landed community at the hands of their creditors, there started a slow process of displacement of the former by the latter. In many cases the evicted land-holders went to swell the ranks of the landless proletariat with whom the new proprietors of land had very little identity views and interests. According to these scholars British rule also witnessed a significant change in the form of payment of wages of these labourers. Prior to British rule they were universally paid in kind at the time of harvest from the common heap of produce. But under British rule they were no longer paid in kind; with the rise in prices they were increasingly paid in cash which eventually led to decline in the rates of their wages.

But recent researches in some other parts of India have raised serious doubts about this general increase in the number of agricultural labourers which had often been ascribed to the large scale eviction of the proprietors by their creditors. It is also held out that as a result of 'a large increase in the total village production' and 'growth of new tasks inside the village' agricultural labourers generally found 'better remuneration' during the period under review.

In view of these conflicting opinions about the agricultural labourers under British rule it would be worthwhile to reopen the whole question and the Punjab during the second half of the 19th century may be taken up as a test case. The present paper while analysing the composition of these labourers will attempt to focus attention on the subsequent changes introduced in the forms of their payment of wages. In the light of these

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significant developments this paper will not only try to evaluate their role in the agrarian economy but also seek to clarify the different existing arguments about their economic condition towards the close of the last century.

### II. Agricultural labourers under Sikh rule

Agricultural labourers were by no means a new development in the rural society of the Punjab during the period under review. The available official reports sufficiently support the view that a distinct class of agricultural labourers evidently existed during Sikh rule helping *zamindars* in the cultivation of their lands. Broadly speaking, the then agrarian society was composed of various castes and tribes. Of them the Jats, Rajputs and the *Sayyids* usually enjoyed the highest social status while below them, almost at the lowest level, there existed a number of low castes such as *Chamars*, *Chuhars* and *Dhanaks*. It was commonly believed that only the higher castes and tribes could claim to be the owners of land while the lower castes and tribes could not generally acquire this respectable status. This form of social restriction was more or less universal, though its degree of rigidity varied from place to place. For example, it was comparatively more rigid in some of the eastern hills and submontane districts like Kangra and Hoshiarpur where strong caste considerations played a vital factor in the first half of the 19th century. In a number of cases, no doubt these low caste people could enjoy some *mafi* (rent free) lands in lieu of their services, though the real ownership over these lands did not belong to them. They could only hold and cultivate them, but their *zamindari* rights customarily remained with the high caste village *zamindars*.

While they could hardly become owners of lands, their assistance was widely needed by *zamindars* in the village production organisation. The reasons were the following. To begin with, such labourers were often employed by *zamindars* who had more lands than they could cultivate themselves. In the eastern and south-western districts like Hissar and Multan, cultivable holdings were usually too big to be cultivated by their family. Naturally, for better tillage, they had to appoint labourers. In some parts of the province, caste restrictions also imposed definite social disabilities in employing female folk in cultivation of lands. In this connection the Rajputs of Hoshiarpur<sup>1</sup> or the *Khanzadahs* of Gurgaon<sup>2</sup>

1. *Hoshiarpur Settlement Report* (Hereinafter S. R.), 1915, para 9, p. 8.

2. Denzil Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*; being a reprint of the chapter on 'The Races, Castes and Tribes of the People' in the *Report on the Census of the Panjab*, published in 1883 by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I. (Patiala, 1970), p. 181.

deserve our special attention. In these districts the prevalence of the *pardah* resulting in the seclusion of woman placed them in a disadvantageous position : for they were deprived of their regular support in tillage which a *Jatni* pretty frequently rendered to the Jats in the central and submontane districts. Further, in many districts ploughing was regarded to be a very degrading occupation among the high caste *zamindars* and hence they deliberately abstained from it. In Kangra, for example, the prejudice against touching the plough was so great that if any high caste Rajput *zamindar* drove it, he was immediately relegated to the status of a second grade *zamindar*. 'In meetings of the tribe and at marriage the Rajputs undefiled by the plough will refuse to sit at meals with the *Hal Bah*, or plough driver, as he is contemptuously styled; and many, to avoid the indignity of exclusion, never appear at public assemblies.'<sup>3</sup>

In view of this social stigma many Rajput *zamindars* did not drive the plough and often left it to be done by *Chamars* or *Kolis*. Here again many Brahmin *zamindars* followed the same practice and appointed farm servants popularly known as *kamas*. Finally, in the western districts where cultivation largely depended on elaborate means of artificial irrigation, *zamindars* employed agricultural labourers also for lifting water from wells or for clearing irrigational channels. They were usually appointed for a specific period when regular waterings were generally needed for the ripening of valuable crops like cotton, indigo or sugarcane. These labourers, called *cher*<sup>4</sup> in the rural tracts, were particularly seen in Multan.

It is, therefore, evident that in the first half of the 19th century, agricultural labourers did exist in the rural society and they were mostly recruited from the different low caste people. But in the submontane districts, many high caste *zamindars* also temporarily swelled their rank. Their pressing economic needs<sup>5</sup> prompted many of them to work temporarily as agricultural labourers in nearby villages where the size of the labour market also expanded during the peak periods of harvesting operations. It is, however, extremely difficult to assess accurately to

3. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

4. Memorandum by J. B. Lyall, Financial Commissioner, Punjab, 2 August, 1882, *Proceedings of the Govt. of India*, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Revenue Branch, November 1883, 29 A.

5. This was particularly true about the four eastern submontane districts. Here pressure of population on land and fragmentation of holdings drew the attention of the Settlement Officers ever since the commencement of British rule. Of these four districts, one (Hoshiarpur) may be taken up for our special consideration.

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what extent these men swelled the rank of agricultural labourers. But this form of social mobility among the *zamindars* could hardly become a widespread phenomenon in view of the non-availability of modern means of communications, limited size of the labour market and the stringent forms of caste restriction that still persisted in the rural tracts of the province.

#### III. Caste composition of agricultural labourers

This process no doubt continued in the second half of the 19th century. This was the product of various circumstances which were long at work at the different levels of the agrarian society. Many of these men were high caste *zamindars*, fallen into poorer condition, or members of an agriculturist family having too little land to support their children or other members of the family. In Gujranwala, these field labourers were chiefly recruited from two castes : one of them included Jat *zamindars* popularly known as *lakhains* in the rural society. Having no lands of their own, they usually served the big landlords or female landowners throughout the year.<sup>6</sup> In Hoshiarpur also, their pressing needs prompted many *zamindars*, such as Jats, Sainis and Gujars, to work occasionally as hired labourers.<sup>7</sup> Similarly in Karnal, labourers were often recruited from well to do *zamindars*; here higher wages paid to labourers at certain specific periods of the harvesting operations prompted many of them to take to agricultural labour. In Hazara, many of these labourers 'are generally agriculturists who have had land of their own, and have lost it by debt or poverty. No longer able to keep a plough of their own, they become farm servants of the agriculturists who are well-off.'

Many high caste *zamindars* thus continued to fill the ranks of agricultural labourers during the period under review. But this did not

*Contd. from page 98]*

	Population per square mile	
	1855	1901
Hoshiarpur	426.83	434
Punjab	155.80	178

Source : Census Reports for the respective years.

Similarly, Prof. Bhalla's findings about the Bairampur village (Hoshiarpur) have clearly shown the devastating effects of the fragmentation of holdings on the economic condition of the *zamindars*. See, R. L. Bhalla, *An Economic Survey of Bairampur in the Hoshiarpur District* (The Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry, Lahore, 1922).

6. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 44-45.

7. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 715.

necessarily suggest any definite change in the general caste compositions of the agricultural labourer who mostly belonged to the low castes. The following table bears this out.

**Table 1**

Caste composition of agricultural labourers in some districts of the Punjab

Name of district	Agricultural labourers in per cent. of the district population	Caste compositions of agricultural labourers
1	2	3
Rohtak	3.6	Persons usually employed : <i>Dhanaks, Chamars, Chuhras</i> , etc.
Delhi	3	Persons so employed are of the <i>Koli, Ajris, Chamar</i> castes.
Hoshiarpur	7 or 8	These labourers are principally of the <i>Chuhra, Julaha</i> and <i>Chamar</i> communities.
Lahore	5 to 6	Mostly <i>Chuhras, Changars</i> and <i>Chamars</i> .

Source : *Punjab Report* in reply to inquiries issued by the Famine Commission (Hereinafter *Punjab Report*, Lahore, 1878-79), pp. 711-724.

#### IV. Changes in the size of agricultural labourers during the second half of the 19th century

Another important factor was the changing size of the agricultural labourers during the period under review. Their number depended on a number of circumstances like the economic condition of *zamindars* who mostly employed them and the size of the readily available low caste population like the *Chamars, Chuhras* and *Dhanaks*. Accurate census statistics for the pre-British period are not available and hence some broad generalisation could only be attempted.

In those days in most of the western districts such as Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan prosperous agrarian communities were rarely found because of the insecurity of harvest; *zamindars* were not also sufficiently rich enough to employ them regularly throughout the year. On the other hand, in most of the central and submontane districts *zamindars* were comparatively well-off and the size of the low caste population was also larger. Under these circumstances, in the latter districts agricultural labourers were more frequently appointed and their size were also somewhat larger. The census statistics will illustrate the point.

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**Table 2**

Agricultural labourers in per cent. in four different regions of the province from 1881 to 1901

Name of district	Region	Agricultural labourers in per cent. of the total population		
		1881	1891	1901
1	2	3	4	5
Delhi	Eastern Punjab	1.05	4.74	2.45
Gurdaspur	Submontane Punjab	0.87	9.58	1.57
Lahore	Central Punjab	0.57	9.51	2.21
Bannu	Western Punjab	0.1	1.7	1.09

Source : *Census Report* for the respective years.

During these years we notice that some broad changes took place in the size of agricultural labourers. Broadly speaking, it was a period of gradual increase in the number of agricultural labourers. This increase can largely be explained in term of general rise of the population of the Punjab. Accordingly, this increase would naturally be the largest in the central districts like Lahore, Ferozepore and Gujranwala or south-western districts like Multan and Montgomery. Secondly, this increase was again largely due to an increased demand of labour in the canal colonies, on public works coupled with a greater movement among the labourers with the commencement of modern means of communications.<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, with the rise in the wages of labour in the north-western and canal districts of the province, many small landholders migrated there in search of higher wages and better livelihood. This form of labour mobility particularly increased with the decline in the customary rates of wages (paid to the village servants) in the central and submontane districts of the province.

The early administrative reports of the 1850s furnished very little information about the agricultural labourers of the province. In one such administrative reports it was, however, incidentally stated that 'each man owned and tilled his own glebe and the people were accustomed to joint action and mutual support.'<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the first provincial census of 1855 mentioned practically nothing about them. But according to the census

8. *Memorandum* by W. C. Renouf, Director of Agriculture, Punjab, on the first wages survey of the Punjab, taken in December 1909, *Selections from the Records of the Office of the Financial Commissioner, Punjab*, New Series, No. 24, No. LXXVIII (Lahore, 1911), para 11. (Hereinafter *Selections*, F. C.)

9. *Ibid.* para 18.

of 1868, agricultural labourers and herdsmen engaged in pastoral habits constituted nearly 3 per cent. of the total population of the Punjab.<sup>10</sup> They were coming in larger numbers, particularly, from districts like Gujranwala, Muzaffargarh and Multan where prior to canal constructions, many nomadic tribes were engaged in pastoral habits. If we exclude these men from this provincial return, the total size of agricultural labourers would have been somewhat less than 3 per cent. In the next decade, according to the Famine Report of 1878-79, no major increase was noticeable. It was then found that in 'unirrigated tracts, the class of agricultural labourers and of artisans, is very small, probably not more than 2 or 3 per cent. of the population, whereas in irrigated tracts it is always larger.'<sup>11</sup> It was then also revealed that in the central district, there was comparatively a greater concentration of the agricultural labourers, perhaps largely due to the higher rate of wages prevailing there.

But the census of 1881 recorded a major increase in the number of agricultural labourers in most of the south-western and northern districts of the province. It was largely due to an extraordinary demand of labour with the opening out of cannaal irrigation and the increase of cultivation in these tracts. Prior to this period agricultural labourers here did not constitute a significant portion of rural population; and *zamindars* were also too poor to employ them and the labour market was equally of a restricted nature. But with the commencement of irrigation from canals like the Sidhnai (1886-87) and the Swat (1885) a great change started. An extraordinary demand of labour force was increasingly felt; this sudden demand led upward movement of wages and labourers from the adjoining as well as from the densely populated submontane and central tracts emigrated there in search of higher wages. This emigration of labourers, however, persisted till the closing years of the century and the opening out of the Lower Chenab Canal Colony (1892) evidently stimulated this process.

#### **V. Changes in the forms of payment of wages**

This labour mobility brought in its train a series of changes, the most interesting of which was perhaps the increasing attempt on the part of *zamindars* to pay them more in cash and less in kind. In this connection a note on the traditional form of payment of wages which prevailed during the days of Sikh rule would be in order.

During Sikh rule, agricultural labourers were almost universally paid

10. *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1868* (Lahore, 1869), Statement IV.

11. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 710.

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in kind. It is, however, extremely difficult to measure accurately such wages in view of the non-availability of correct district-wise wages rates of those days. In the light of subsequent information, it is commonly believed that they usually received a share of the produce at harvest, besides their daily food when employed for reaping, threshing and harvesting. But their share of produce again must have varied from region to region. In the central and submontane districts like Ludhiana, Jullundur and Amritsar (traditionally famous for their agricultural prosperity) it might have been slightly higher. Similarly in the extreme western districts like Dera Ghazi Khan and Muzaffargarh the insecurity of cultivation and the poor economic condition of the *zamindars* accounted for lower rates of wages.<sup>12</sup> Even recognising these regional variations, it can broadly be said 'that agricultural labourers in the Punjab were paid the equivalent of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas per day at annexation.'<sup>13</sup> If it is assumed to be the average daily wages of agricultural labourers of the entire province, a slightly higher rate might have prevailed in most of the central and submontane districts.

This kind wage was a convenient form of payment and served the interests of both the parties—the employers and the employees. *Zamindars* who mostly employed them often had very little cash at their hands during the lean months of the year while it was easier to pay them in kind at harvest. These labourers were equally in need of food, particularly in times of scarcity, to maintain themselves as well as their families. Payment in kind, therefore, must have helped them in tiding over their immediate difficulties. Further, *zamindars* in those days had to meet most of their official and customary obligations in kind. But in a number of larger towns such as Lahore and Amritsar, cash wage rates were not entirely unknown; their size and amount were, however, too small to affect the prevailing pattern of wage payment in the rural society.

During the second half of the century, however, some distinct changes took place in this. At the annexation kind wage was almost

12. Accurate statistics relating to agricultural wages of the Sikh period are not available; the rural wages survey of 1909 furnished information about the rates prevailing in 1889 and this may be taken up for our present consideration.

Name of the district	Year	Wages paid to labourers in annas
Ludhiana	1889	2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$
Dera Ghazi Khan	1889	2

Source : *Selections, F. C.*, para 10.

13. *Census of India, 1911*, Vol.-XIV, Part-I, para 58, p. 49.



universal. But towards the close of the century, *zamindars* found it convenient to pay their labourers in a mixed form of cash and kind. The exact starting point of this form of wage payment is difficult to determine for most of the settlement reports of the 1850s and 1860s practically made no mention of it. In the 1870s more detailed information was available. In Hoshiarpur, it was found that when employed in harvesting, labourers were commonly paid in kind while at the time of hoeing they were sometimes paid in cash.<sup>14</sup> Again in Delhi, these labourers were 'generally paid in money, a man 2 annas, a woman 1½ annas, a child of 12 to 15, 1 anna, except in harvest time' when they were paid 'in grain of about the same value.' Similar changes were also reported from some of the north-western districts like Peshawar and Rawalpindi. By the close of the 1870s, a mixed wage payment to agricultural labourers had thus clearly emerged.

This did not, however, mean the complete replacement of grain wages by that of a mixed one. In most of the parts of the province, even in districts like Delhi, Sialkot and Dera Ghazi Khan grain wage payment co-existed with the mixed wage payment. In Delhi, for example, reported the Settlement Officer, 'the labourer mostly takes grain'—he would not 'take cash. This rate is 4 seers—or more, reckoned by sheaves (*pulis*) which give something less than a seer each.'<sup>15</sup> Similarly in Sialkot, permanent labourers, known as *kamas*, continued to be paid in cash at the rate of Re. 1 per month in addition to food and clothing. In Ferozepore also they were 'remunerated in the shape either of a share of the grain harvested or of a certain weight or measure of grain delivered half-yearly.'<sup>16</sup>

Towards the close of the century, another slow change took place. Now the *zamindars*, who, in the past, used to make payments sometimes in kind, sometimes in a mixed wage pattern, were increasingly switching over to a pure cash wage payment. Instances of such a change were reported as early as 1879 from districts like Multan and Ambala<sup>17</sup> and at the beginning of the present century it became almost universal in most of the districts of the province. An enquiry in 1909 showed that, in nearly half of 4,728 villages covered in the enquiry, agricultural labourers were paid in cash, while in only 8 per cent. of them pure grain rate

14. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 714.

15. *Delhi, S. R.*, 1882, para 48, p. 42.

16. E. B. Francis, Deputy Commissioner, Ferozepore's No. 31, 2 February, 1888, *Proceedings of the Govt. of India, Revenue and Agriculture Department*, Famine, Branch, December 1888, 1-24 A.

17. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), pp. 713 and 719.

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prevailed. In the next 3 years in districts like Hissar, Gurgaon, Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Mianwali and Muzaffargarh, the few cases of grain wages that were come across in 1909 nearly disappeared. In Gurdaspur also the percentage of villages in which purely grain wages were paid had fallen from 21 to 2 during the same period. The following table shows the changes in this.

**Table 3**  
Cash, kind and mixed wage paid to agricultural labourers  
in 1909 and 1912 (Percentage of villages)

Year	Purely cash	Cash with grain or other supplement	Purely grain
1	2	3	4
1909	49	48	3
1912	58	40	2

Source : *Report on the First Regular Wages Survey of the Punjab*, taken in December 1912 (Lahore, 1913), para 6.

Two conclusions follow from this table : (1) purely grain wages had practically ceased as a form of payment even before 1909, surviving only in a limited number of villages; (2) mixed wage rate, in spite of its early popularity, was also fast losing grounds to purely cash payment during the same period. Such changes are explicable. Obviously, it was an outcome of numerous factors which were long at work. To begin with, it was the rise in prices, especially in the prices of food, that compelled *zamindars* to economise. Naturally, they found it convenient and profitable to pay their labourers increasingly in cash at the harvest price-level keeping as much crop as they could for themselves. During this period also, cash payment was becoming easier perhaps largely because of the greater availability of money in circulation. Secondly, the size of the labour market was also fast increasing during these years, for there was now an additional demand for labour of all kinds to be employed in the extension of cultivation, in various irrigational works, public buildings and communications, etc. In most of these projects, these labourers were universally paid in cash; this might have greatly influenced the general trend of wage payment in the villages. Further, with the growth of modern means of communications and the development of newer job opportunities outside the villages, a new mobility was visible amongst these labourers which again contributed to the breakdown of the traditional form of kind wage payment.

It has recently been argued that in India as a whole 'the develop-

ment of commercial crops' was an important factor in the 'increase in the practice of paying cash wages to agricultural labourers.'<sup>18</sup> However, as far as the Punjab was concerned the cultivation of commercial crops did not evidently lead to an *immediate increase* in the practice of paying cash wages to agricultural labourer. In the middle of the 19th century, almost everywhere in the central Punjab districts, agricultural labourers had the privilege of first plucking of cotton at harvest. With the increase of cotton cultivation they were not deprived of this privilege. Thus from Gujranwala, it was reported in the early 1890s :

Harvest labourers are usually remunerated by being allowed to take away each evening a bundle sheaves (roughly amounting to 6 to 10 seers of grain) .. and the great increase of the cotton cultivation on the Chenab Canal has created such a demand for this kind of labour that in some recent years the cotton pickers whose ranks are swelled now by Changar women from Sialkot, Lahore, and Amritsar, have been known to receive as much as one-fourth of the fibre.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly in the Chenab Canal Colony, cotton pickers were universally allowed to receive a part of their wages in cotton even towards the beginning of the present century.

Leaving aside these regional variations, the general trend of wage payment was, as noted earlier, from kind to cash. This change in the form of payment also meant a corresponding change in their real wages. It was commonly believed that as a result of this change 'in rural areas, wages of both agricultural labourers and village artisans' have risen enormously.<sup>20</sup> In 1909 it was further estimated that the wages of unskilled labourers had nearly doubled since 1890.

While explaining this general trend of rise in wages, Renouf, Director of Agriculture, pointed out that at the annexation (1849), agricultural labourers were paid in the equivalent  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas per day. In 1889 it rose to 2 to 3 annas per day. In 1909 in months in which there was no abnormal demand for labour, agricultural labourers were commonly paid from 2 to 3 annas per day in Gurgaon, 3 annas in Delhi and Kangra,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  annas in Rohtak. These were the only districts in 1909 where the rate of wages per day was under 4 annas. A 4 anna rate was reported in the Salt Range and in Multan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi

18. Surendra J. Patel, *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan* (Bombay 1952), p. 128.

19. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer, 1893-94*, p. 82.

20. *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India*, Vol-I, para 417, p. 170.

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Khan, Karnal and Ambala. In Hissar and the Submontane districts of Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Sialkot the rate was 5 annas. In central Punjab the common rate was 6 annas per day, while in Shahpur, Ferozepore, Lyallpur and Jhang the rate was often as high as 8 annas.

It is, therefore, evident that wages of agricultural labourers rose quite remarkably in the first decade of the present century. To what extent was this rise commensurate with the increase in the prices of day to day articles? According to one school of official opinion this rise in wages was a real rise. The wages of every class of wage earners 'have risen in rural and urban and in cities' resulting 'in a substantial improvement in their material condition—specially of agricultural and general labourers and artisans, who form the majority of the wage earning class.'<sup>21</sup>

But in the light of other official evidence, it is difficult to accept this hypothesis in its entirety; with the rise of the prices of other articles, wages of agricultural labourers no doubt increased, but the former rose faster than the latter. As early as 1869-70 it was admitted by the Government that the rate of wages was not readily adjusted according to the price of food; that was why 'the pressure of scarcity' was 'more severely felt by the labouring classes.' Even in the succeeding years, as the *Report of the Indian Famine Commission* (1898) suggests, 'wages of these people have not risen in the last twenty years in due proportion to the rise in prices of their necessities of life.' This argument of the Indian Famine Commission receives an additional corroboration from the statistical information supplied by the *Prices and Wages in India* (published annually since 1873). Even accepting that the rates of wages mentioned by these series were slightly higher than the rural rates, we can make a comparative study of wages of six major districts of the province.<sup>22</sup> This will also lead us to conclude the rise in wages of agricultural labourers was far from universal during the last quarter of the 19th century.

Of the six major districts of the Punjab, a steady rise occurred in Multan and Rawalpindi in the real wages of agricultural labourers. With one or two minor exceptions, in Multan this upward movement of wages was almost a normal phenomenon at time when districts like Ludhiana and Delhi witnessed a steadily declining rate of the same. As early as 1874 this wage push was clearly discernible and by 1901 it was nearly 154 per cent. higher, 1873 being taken as the base year. [See tabs 4 and 5.]

21. *Ibid.*, para 418, p. 174.

22. These six districts represented different physical regions of the province.

**Table 4**  
Average monthly wages of agricultural labourers in rupees in six  
districts at the end of each year 1873-1901

Year	Amritsar	Delhi	Peshawar	Rawalpindi	Ludhiana	Multan
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1873	6.00	5.62	5.62	5.5	5.00	3.25
1874	5.81	5.62	5.00	5.5	5.00	5.5
1875	6.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.37
1876	6.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	6.31
1877	6.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
1878	6.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.37
1879	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00	5.00	6.37
1880	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00	5.00	6.44
1881	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00	5.00	6.75
1882	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00	5.00	6.75
1883	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00	5.00	6.75
1884	6.00	5.00	6.00	8.00	5.00	6.75
1885	6.00	5.62	6.00	8.00	5.00	6.75
1886	5.56	6.44	10.00	6.00	5.00	7.5
1887	5.50	5.62	10.00	6.00	6.00	8.00
1888	7.00	5.62	6.00	8.00	5.00	8.00
1889	7.00	5.62	6.00	6.00	6.00	8.00
1890	7.00	5.62	5.50	6.00	6.00	8.00
1891	7.00	5.62	5.50	6.00	7.00	8.00
1892	7.00	5.62	6.50	6.00	7.00	9.00
1893	7.00	5.62	5.60	7.00	5.50	9.00
1894	7.00	7.50	6.00	7.5	5.00	8.00
1895	7.00	5.62	6.50	6.09	5.00	10.00
1896	8.00	5.62	5.50	6.56	7.50	9.00
1897	8.00	7.50	4.50	6.56	6.00	9.00
1898	8.00	5.62	5.50	7.00	7.50	12.00
1899	8.00	7.75	5.50	7.00	5.50	12.00
1900	8.00	7.75	6.50	7.00	7.50	12.00
1901	8.00	7.50	6.50	7.00	7.50	12.00

Source : *Prices and Wages in India*, 19th Issue, Table 53 (Calcutta, 1902).

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**Table 5**  
Annual wages in grain of agricultural labourers in six districts  
from 1873 to 1901 (in seers of wheat)

Year	Amritsar	Delhi	Peshawar	Rawalpindi	Ludhiana	Multan
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1873	145.38	106.78	103.69	101.58	125.80	67.67
1874	141.76	108.31	104.30	129.58	127.90	113.96
1875	149.58	107.05	116.45	173.46	131.35	124.80
1876	149.52	123.75	152.10	194.88	129.45	150.37
1877	150.36	92.35	116.55	171.06	125.95	123.42
1878	102.6	70.5	80.80	108.00	88.85	76.85
1879	84.36	70.5	49.42	73.84	76.60	79.31
1880	98.16	87.4	47.32	87.2	88.65	89.90
1881	122.04	96.85	67.76	104.96	99.40	110.30
1882	147.96	92.95	112.21	162.16	128.55	121.97
1883	143.28	94.85	142.59	199.12	120.69	117.70
1884	156.84	100.10	167.70	246.4	127.10	111.64
1885	157.50	126.45	151.74	215.68	139.35	122.04
1886	133.95	122.87	189.6	126.00	110.00	110.62
1887	87.78	82.67	130.00	83.22	99.72	106.93
1888	117.53	82.89	79.50	116.64	90.00	113.68
1889	144.69	97.16	117.00	114.44	131.22	126.98
1890	128.72	91.77	110.31	112.74	114.72	124.00
1891	101.22	78.90	82.06	87.72	93.76	104.00
1892	92.22	81.26	79.10	74.52	102.34	106.83
1893	114.59	93.40	71.72	103.75	98.56	129.78
1894	176.47	153.15	135.24	188.10	127.90	155.86
1895	131.81	97.16	121.61	124.60	100.85	170.40
1896	102.4	66.42	64.29	79.05	98.47	107.46
1897	82.48	74.32	44.73	65.6	66.24	86.58
1898	131.36	80.75	79.31	112.2	132.60	165.48
1899	130.32	113.22	77.6	102.06	92.56	177.96
1900	98.64	87.80	73.90	81.69	92.77	141.00
1901	126.64	99.82	98.28	105.00	118.95	172.20

Source : *Prices and Wages in India*, 19th Issue, Table 2 (Calcutta, 1902).

During the early years of British rule, Multan was not regarded as a very flourishing agricultural region. Scarcity of population and low agricultural productivity characterised its agrarian economy. *Zamindars* were too poor to employ these labourer at a rate prevalent in districts like Amritsar. In the 1870s things began to change very slowly with the opening of the railways connecting Multan with Karachi and its resultant growth as an important wheat exporting centre was only a question of time. From now on its importance went on increasing till in the 1890s it almost outstripped many of the central and eastern districts in this fields. As a result of all these factors, newer avenues of employment developed and wages rose in towns leading to a corresponding rise of the same in the rural tracts.

The trend of rising wages persisted also in the 1880s due to canal excavations and other allied works. In 1882 the Sidhnai Canal construction started and its obvious outcome was an extraordinary demand for labour. In the 1890s with the commencement of the Chenab Canal Colonisation in the neighbouring districts like Shahpur and Jhang, an additional demand for labour was increasingly felt leading to a rise in their wages in the closing years of the last century.

In Rawalpindi the wages of agricultural labourers increased in the last quarter of the 19th century. This rise was said to have been due 'to peculiar causes. Any war on the frontier or big concentration of troops in Rawalpindi at once send up wages.' Actually in the late 1870s, the Kabul campaign, together with the construction of the Punjab Northern State Railways, created an extraordinary demand for labour in this district and contributed to a general rise in their wages. In the mid-1880s, the continued tension along the Afghan borders maintained this upward wage movement, though the settlement report of the late 1880s indicated a slight fall in their wages since the Kabul War, 'when all kinds of labour were at "famine" rates.' Even then the wages were somewhat higher than what they were thirty years ago and it was then estimated that wages have 'increased by nearly 50 per cent. since the Sikh rule.' In the 1890s also wages were somewhat higher than those in 1873 and the 'tendency is for wages of agricultural labourers to be paid in cash at the rates as unskilled labour in the city...'

Wage fluctuations in Peshawar are comparable to those of Rawalpindi with one major exception in the late 1890s. Here as in Rawalpindi wages rose in some of the years of the 1870s and 1880s. However, unlike Rawalpindi, wages here tended to fall in the 1890s. In the 1870s, due to the Kabul campaign, 'an extraordinary demand of labour of all kinds' was leading to a rise in the wages of agricultural labourers. Then

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again in the next decade the district 'has been in increasing prosperity from the influx of money and occupation during the Afghan War, the introduction of the railways, the opening of the Swat Canal in Hatanagar and Mardan in 1885 and the development of peace and security in the Valley. Consequently, wages of the labourers increased. In the early 1890s also, their wages increased, but now the prices of necessary things rose at a still faster rate, thereby bringing about a decline in their real wages.<sup>23</sup> Why did this decline occur in the last decade of the 19th century? In the 1870s and 1880s wages rose due to certain extraordinary circumstances which were non-existent in the 1890s. Further, the district went through a series of lean years during these years, resulting in a further decline in their real wages. Indeed, their real wages were often so meagre that many of them felt the need of emigrating towards the canal colonies and the declining wages largely explained their decline in number in the last decade of the 19th century (from 5.47 per cent. in 1891 to 2.06 per cent. in 1901).

Of the six Punjab districts, it was in Amritsar that agricultural labourers enjoyed the highest rate of wages (145 seers of wheat per month) in 1873. But during the period from 1873 and 1901, their real wages decreased, i.e., the index number falling from 100 in 1873 to 87 in 1901. In view of the highest rate of wages prevailing in 1873, it is reasonable to conclude that factors contributing to any permanent rise in wages were also present in the pre-1873 period. Actually in the pre-1873 period, cultivation had already increased quite strikingly and by 1870 nearly 70 per cent. of the total cultivable area was under the plough. By this time Amritsar was regarded to be an important centre of commerce, closely traversed by the railways and other means of communications.

But after 1873 the situation gradually changed and the existing avenues of employment began to shrink. During the last quarter of the century, no major increase of cultivation occurred. Whatever increase had taken place affected mainly the poorer and inferior soils. This new cultivation was often a very costly affair. In order to reduce the overall cost of cultivation of these lands, *zamindars* sought to avoid employing as far as possible regular agricultural labourers. Equally interesting was the fact that no notable new avenues of employments were created by the construction of canals and other allied works as they often did in districts like Multan or Rawalpindi. Further, with the growth of population, pressure on land increased and this again partly reduced the possibility of a rise in wages of agricultural labourers. Thus as a result of all

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23. See Table 5.



these, there was no significant rise in their real wages during the last quarter of the century and many of them tended to migrate to the canal colonies in search of higher wages and better livelihood.

In 1873, of all the six important districts of the province, Ludhiana stood second in order of the wage rate (125 seers of wheat per month). In Ludhiana also, a major increase in the wages of agricultural labourers took place in the pre-1873 period. During that period, wages appeared to have greatly increased with the extension of cultivation, the opening of the Sirhind canal and the emergence of Ludhiana as an important trading centre. It was then considered to be a fairly cultivated region and agricultural labourers constituted an important section<sup>24</sup> of the rural folk.

However, at the time of the completion of the revision of land revenue settlement in 1883, the Settlement Officer found that the scope for the new cultivation in the district was extremely limited. Naturally, with the growth of population, pressure of population on cultivable land further increased. This again prevented any general rise in the wages of agricultural labourers. Further, with the rise of prices, as the District Officer pointed out the *zamindars* in Ludhiana also attempted to cut down the wages of the *Kamins* (village servants) and labourers during the closing years of the 19th century.<sup>25</sup> Finally the recurring famines also adversely affected the position of the agricultural labourers. All these factors compelled many of them to migrate towards the canal districts.

It is evident from the Table 5 that in Delhi also the real wages of the agricultural labourers did not increase in the last quarter of the 19th century. In fact the wages in Delhi sharply fell. This decline in the wages of agricultural labourers was the product of three main factors. In the first place, recurring famines must be held largely responsible for it. Here good harvests were few and bad harvests were many; famines occurred in 1868-69, 1877-78, 1887-88, 1896-97 and 1898-99. They not only crippled the economic resources of *zamindars* who employed them, but also threw many of these labourers out of employment. Secondly, the Delhi labour market was only marginally affected by the opening of new irrigational projects and the extension of canal irrigation over newer tracts which often contributed to a rise in the real wages of labourers in districts like Multan and Jhang. Finally, the size of emigration to the canal colonies was also insignificant. In many cases, *zomindars* often attempted

24. In 1868 agricultural labourers constituted nearly 10 per cent. of the total population. *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1868*, Statement No. IV.

25. *Ludhiana District Gazetteer, 1888-89*, p. 100.

to cut down their wages and the following poem throws some interesting light on this aspect of the problem.

*Sikhar dopahri, kallewari,  
Shabash merə bhaion ne !  
Hui sham, din laga chhipne  
Ab kiyon ghure jamaion ne !*

[At the time of the early meal (kallewari) and at full mid-day you were saying 'Bravo ! my boys.' But when evening comes and the day begins to die (hide), why do you look angrily on us who are your sons-in-law (a characteristic expression of abuse is to call a man a father or brother of one's wife).]

Under these circumstances, a sharp fall in their wages was inevitable.

Thus of the six Punjab districts, at least in four, there was a fall in the real wages of agricultural labourers during this period, while in two of them, i.e., Rawalpindi and Multan, a satisfactory rate of increase was reported. But these two districts were still lagging much behind. Amritsar where, in spite of a steady fall in real wages since 1873, agricultural labourers continued to enjoy comparatively a better remuneration for their labour. In Rawalpindi even this wage rise did not bring about any improvement in their economic condition. It was found that, in the 1880s when their wages were fast rising, many of them continued to suffer from a daily insufficiency of food.<sup>26</sup> The situation was even more critical in Delhi. As early as 1879 it was found that their economic condition in the average years was so 'precarious' that they were not even trusted by village *sahukars*. They were not allowed to receive any advance from them.<sup>27</sup> This plight of the Delhi labourers continued unabated till the first decade of the present century. It was then estimated that they received only 3 annas as their daily wages at a time when many of the labourers of the central Punjab districts got as much as 6 to 8 annas per diem.<sup>28</sup>

In Rohtak, as in Delhi, agricultural labourers suffered greatly towards the close of the century and their economic condition was equally miserable.

For the most part their condition is decidedly inferior as to ability to

26. Ghulam Ahmed, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Rawalpindi's opinion quoted in E. B. Steedman, Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Punjab's note, 12 June, 1888, *Proceedings of the Govt. of India*, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Famine Branch, December 1888, 1-24 A.

27. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 711.

28. *Census of India 1911*, Vol. XIV, Part I, para 58, p. 49.

subsist from harvest to harvest in as much as the poorer agriculturist can receive supplies from banias and others, and have running account, whereas these unfortunates get no credit.<sup>29</sup>

Actually the great majority of them were extremely poor. They were clad in rags and lived in wretched and insufficient cottages along with their livestock of the farm. In course of the next few decades their economic condition further deteriorated. One village inquiry conducted in 1932 clearly admitted that they were considered to be the 'poorest sections of the village community.' A similar state of affairs prevailed in some of the submontane districts like Ambala and Hoshiarpur. In Ambala, for example, in the background of a general rise of prices, the District officer expressed grave doubts whether the actual condition of the labourer was much better than it was in olden days.<sup>30</sup> The extent of their extreme poverty was revealed by the Kutubpur village enquiry, conducted by Dr Lucas at the beginning of the present century. Dr Lucas found that even in the average years they had usually very little surplus of their own and they were naturally deeply involved in debt. The following table illustrates this point.

**Table 6**  
Average annual income and expenditure of a field labourer in  
Kutubpur (Hosiarpur) village

Income				Expenditure			
1				2			
	Rs.	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
Income from				1. Payment of land revenue	3	12	0
profession and				and other charges			
other sources	156	14	0	2. Payment on account of			
				debt by instalments	13	6	0
Total income	156	14	0	3. Payment of interest	1	12	0
				4. Total annual expenditure			
				on the purchase of food	135	8	8
				Total expenditure	154	6	8

Source : Lucas, E.D., *The Economic Life of a Punjab Village* (Lahore, no date).

In some of the north-western districts their economic condition was even worse. In Peshawar many of them had little surplus of their own. Of the different types of labourers, *charkars* (agricultural labourers) were

29. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 713.

30. *Ambala District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 54.

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the most wretched, often tied to their creditors in a kind of debt slavery.<sup>31</sup> Even more miserable was the fate of the *halis* of Hazara. Commenting on their economic condition, the District Officer wrote :<sup>32</sup>

The *Halis* are generally agriculturists who have had land of their own, and have lost it by debt or poverty. No longer able to keep a plough of their own, they become farm servants of the agriculturists who are well off. The master to whom they engage themselves commonly pays their debts. If a man wants a *Hali*, he is generally willing to do this to obtain one. The money thus advanced by the master used to vary from Rs. 20 to 60; but now cases are not uncommon, in which a master advances Rs. 200 or even more... If another man wishes to engage *Hali*, he generally pays up the debt due to the first master, and the *Hali* is then transferred to him. Public opinion holds the heirs of a deceased *Hali* liable for the debt; and a man who marries the *Hali*'s widow is held similarly liable. These are incidents of the *Hali*'s services which could not be enforced in our courts, but I mention because they are commonly acted on by the people concerned.

But some of the canal-irrigated districts of the province, however, presented a slightly different picture. In Amritsar, in spite of a decline in their real wages, agricultural labourers were comparatively well-off and they usually lived on grain and money previously earned.<sup>33</sup> Even in the first quarter of the present century, they were often paid 'liberally' by *zamindars*,<sup>34</sup> many of whom were on military service. In Multan they enjoyed a satisfactory wage rate which prompted many labourers from adjoining tracts to migrate there. Then again in the canal colony tracts, the opening of canal irrigation and the increase of cultivation created an extraordinary demand for labour leading to a steady rise in their wages.<sup>35</sup>

Thirty years ago, grain enough for food with one rupee a month in cash, a suit of *khaddar* (home spun) cloth per harvest, with the addition of a blanket in winter, formed sufficient attraction for a farm servant in the central Punjab, but nothing short of Rs. 9 or 10 per month or a mixed cash payment and allowance in kind,

31. *Punjab Reports* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 721-722.

32. *Hazara S. R.* 1876, para 54, p. 99.

33. *Punjab Report* (Lahore, 1878-79), p. 715.

34. *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1914*, Vol-XX, A, p. 71.

35. *Annual Report for the Chenab, Jhelum, Chuntan and Sohag Para Colonies 1902-03*, Chenab Colony, para 12, p. 10.

equivalent thereto, will now induce a labourer to take up a fixed engagement; and he will look forward to certain other perquisites.<sup>36</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

It is, therefore, evident that a distinct class of agricultural labourers existed during Sikh rule. These labourers were mostly recruited from the lower caste people; but in some cases high caste *zamindars* often took up this profession during certain months of the year. The size of this class underwent a great change during the period under review. Their rapid increase in the western and south-western districts of the province was particularly remarkable and this was no doubt largely due to an extraordinary demand of labour of all kinds to be employed in the extension of cultivation, in various irrigational works, public buildings and communications, etc. This period also witnessed a series of changes in the forms of their payment; the most important of which was perhaps the increasing attempt on the part of *zamindars* to pay them more in cash and less in kind. It was clearly seen that at the beginning of the present century purely grain wages had practically ceased as a form of payment to labourers, surviving only in a limited number of villages. These changes, however, brought about a great change in their real income. In the districts of Delhi, Rohtak, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur and Gurgaon their economic condition generally deteriorated, while in Rawalpindi, as it has already been pointed out, they suffered from a daily insufficiency of food. But in Multan and other canal-irrigated districts their real wages definitely increased. In the Chenab Canal Colony also they received a better remuneration of their labour and the Colonisation Officer had little hesitation in pointing out that they 'have generally improved their condition' by taking advantage of the lax supervision of their proprietors.

What emerges from this study is the picture of an immense complexity of changes concerning the role of the agricultural labourers in the rural economy of the province. The changes that occurred in their economic conditions were far from uniform in type and nature. It would be misleading to apply either of the levels—economic growth or economic decline—to these changes occurring in the province during the period under review. In some parts of the submontane and eastern Punjab their economic condition strikingly declined, while in the canal irrigated tracts they managed to receive a better remuneration of their labour at the beginning of the present century.

36. *Census of India 1911*, Vol.-XIV, Part I, para 58, p. 49.

## The Social Reform Organisations in U.P. and Punjab, and the Press : 1858-1910

DR S.P. SHARMA\*

Long subjugation to foreign rule, lack of contact with the progressive forces of the world, and a stereotype form of knowledge, based upon blind faith impenetrable to reason—all these told upon the mental and moral gaze of men and society. The country's pristine glory was forgotten. The British mercantile interests had full play in ruining the indigenous industries, town handicrafts, village artisans and uprooting the educational system. Owing to lack of impetus and knowledge, social outlook became narrow in practice. It led to the general all-round downfall of our social values. The social sinisters, like a deep-rooted belief in a number of gods and goddesses and worship of their images, infanticide, child-marriage, expensive marriage system, prostitution, untouchability and a variety of superstitions were crying for relief, but the society was absolutely callous towards them.

These social evils provided the backdrop for the impact of the west by introduction of western educational system through the medium of English. It broke the barriers which had hitherto effectively shut India from the outside world and opened the floodgate of western ideas. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru stated about the western impact, "The real impact of the west came to India in the nineteenth century through technical changes and their dynamic consequences. In the realm of ideas also there was shock and changes, a widening of the horizon which had so long been confined within narrow shell."<sup>1</sup> It was the key which opened the great treasures of rationalist and democratic thought of the modern west to the India."<sup>2</sup> The western impact started in the first half of the nineteenth century, acquired great momentum in the second half. The challenge of Christianity also inspired the two major communities—Hindus and Muslims of these provinces to purify their original faith, religion, customs, irrational practices and cruel superstitions. These circumstances paved the way for organisations for social reform in the N.W.P. and, the Punjab.

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1. Nehru, J. L. : *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, 1946, p. 398.

2. Desai, A. R. : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, 1954, p. 136.

### A. The Hindu Social Reform Organisations :

The English educated natives, who imbibed the democratic English literature and modern social ideas of Europe, initiated several movements in these provinces. They felt a sense of inferiority, they had to delve for glories in their own past. The Brahmo-Samaj was founded in Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Later on its branches were opened in the N.W.P. and Punjab. The Brahmo-Samaj was founded in Lahore in 1863 by Babu Navin Chandra Roy.<sup>3</sup> Besides it, several societies, sabhas and leagues also came into existence. The Sat Sabha was established at Lahore in 1866 to impart elementary truths of the western knowledge to the people of the Punjab through their own languages. Its main aims were—social reform and development. But the movement could not get much success and it died out by the end of the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> The 'Anjuman Hymala' was formed at Kangra and its branches were opened at Dharmshala, Noorpur, and other places.<sup>5</sup>

The 'Delhi Society' was founded by Pandit Bisheshar Nath to propagate social reform.<sup>6</sup> A society was established at Kanpur under the name of the 'Social Improvement Society.'<sup>7</sup> The *Oudh Akhbar* reported the foundation of a 'Reform League' at Aligarh. Its aim was to promote Indian civilization.<sup>8</sup> The same paper reported the establishment of a Hindu religious society at Lucknow, 'Jalsa-i-Hindu Dharam Prakash.' The object of the society was to disseminate religious knowledge among the Hindus and prevent them from being converted to other religions because of ignorance of the principle of their own religion.<sup>9</sup> The religious society named 'Nit Prakash Sabha' and another one named 'Amritsar Dharma [Sabha]' were founded at Amritsar to eradicate the various religious and social abuses prevalent in the city.<sup>10</sup> The *Patiāla Akhbar* noticed on 21st March, 1873, the establishment of a society in that city under the name 'Sutt Sabha', its object being the introduction of reforms in social and religious customs among the Hindus.<sup>11</sup> The Arya-Samaj was founded

3. Joshi, Vijay Chandra : *Lala Lajpat Rai : Writings and Speeches*, Delhi, 1966, p. XIV.

4. Chhabra, G. S. : *The Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II.

5. *Bhidia Bilas* (Newspaper), 17 Oct., 1867—*Report on Native Newspapers in N. W. P. and Punjab* 1869, p. 509.

6. *Punjabi Akhbar*, 22 Jan., 1869; *Ibid.*, 1869, p. 49.

7. *Jalwa-i-Toor*, 30 April, 1870; *Ibid.*, 1870, p. 130.

8. *Oudh Akhbar*, 20 Sept., 1870; *Ibid.*, pp. 371-72.

9. *Ibid.*, 20 June, 1871; *Ibid.*, 1871, p. 338.

10. *Koh-i-Nur*, 1st Feb., 1873; *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 97.

11. *Patiāla Akhbār*, 1st March, 1873; *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 218.

#### SOCIAL REFORMS IN U.P. AND PUNJAB, AND PRESS 1858-1910

by Swamy Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. It became popular among the Hindus of the Punjab and the N. W. P. It represented a serious reaction to growing influence of Islam and Christianity.

The *Koh-i-Nur* referred to a association, called 'The Indian National Society', which was established at Lahore by some educated enthusiasts.<sup>12</sup> In the N.W. P. and the Punjab Sabhas and Conferences of Vaish, Jats, Sarin Khatri, the Khalsa (Sikh) and Jain communities were formed along with a number of Brahmin caste associations.<sup>13</sup> The advent of Indian National Congress in 1885 proved itself as most important organisation which lent a useful helping hand to social reform movements. The congress had devoted its attention to encourage social reforms and worked in accordance with Lord Dufferin's advice, who asked them to establish joint stock companies with a view to improving trade and industries and ameliorating the condition of the people.<sup>14</sup> The Jats did not lag behind. They also formed a Jat Conference at Meerut in 1890, stressed on reform in marriage system. It launched a newspaper named *Jat Samachar*.<sup>15</sup> The Social Conference Report summed up the work in the Punjab carried through agencies of *Biradaries* or Caste Associations, which were established in all large towns, their actions being confined to their respective castes. These reform activities were supplemented by the activity of the Brahmo-Samaj, Arya-Samaj, Singh Sabha, Sanatan Dharam Sabha and other societies.<sup>16</sup>

In both the Punjab and the N. W. P., the National Social conferences were held. Lala Devraj, Lala Munshi Ram, Lala Hans Raj, Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab and Pandit Ajodhia Nath, Lala Baij Nath, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya of the N. W. P. were some of the chief social conference supporters. But some orthodox people did not favour the heterodoxical ideas, particularly of Arya-Samaj. In the Punjab Pandit Din Dayal Sharma, whose vigorous attack on the Arya Samaj gained strength, founded the Sanatan Dharama Sabha in 1895 at Delhi and Hardwar.<sup>17</sup> Because of this rapid growth of the movements on the national level, the Bharat Dharm Mahamandal conducted its first conference at Delhi in August 1900 under the presidentship of the Maharaja of Dar-

12. *Koh-i-Nur*, 18 April, 1884; *Ibid.*, 1883, pp. 353-54.

13. Heimasath, Charles H. : *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, 1964, p. 210.

14. *Bharat Jivan*, 10 Nov., 1890, Microfilm, at N. M. M. and Library, Teen Murty, New Delhi.

15. Heimasath, Charles H. : *op. cit.*, p. 286.

16. Report of the 8th *National Social Conference*, p. 80.

17. Heimasath, Charles H. : *op. cit.*, p. 318.



bhanga, and Raja Pandit Suraj Kaul and Mr. Justice Chatterji helped in it.<sup>18</sup>

In line with the developing social reform consciousness, the orthodox section also jumped into the arena of social reform, to eradicate its evils. Even staunch orthodox Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya supported the resolution on female education at the National Social Conference, asserting that the seed of other social reforms lay in female education.<sup>19</sup> According to the report of the 4th National Social Conference, the following are the associations, which were doing useful work in the field of social reform.<sup>20</sup>

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Avenue</i>	<i>Name of Association</i>
1.	Hyderabad (Sindh)	Sind Social Reform Association.
2 to 5.	Lahore	Widow Marriage Association, Hindu Sabha, Guru Singh Sabha, Kayastha Sabha.
6 to 8.	Mathura	Gaud Brahmin Sabha, Kayastha Sabha, Agrawal Sabha.
9 to 10.	Gorakhpur	Kayastha Sabha, Temperence Association.
11 to 12.	Gazipur	Kayastha Sabha, High Caste Reform Society.
13 to 15.	Barielly	Sadharan Amrit Vardhani Sabha, Kayastha Sabha, Brahmin Sabha.
16 to 17.	Allahabad	Kayastha Sabha, Hindu Samaj.
18.	Ballia	Kayastha Sabha.

In its 5th Report, National Social Conference added some other names in the chain of associations :<sup>21</sup>

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Avenue</i>	<i>Name of Association</i>
1 to 9.	Lahore	Khatri Sabha, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Sami Sabha, Kikarni Sabha, Bhera Anand Sabha, Purity Association, Temperence League, Sudhi Sabha, Bhargava Sabha.

All these above mentioned Reform Associations [except the Singh Sabhas] wanted to confine themselves to Hinduism and within the wider object of their own caste privileges. Some new caste organisations

18. Singh, S. R. : *Nationalism and Social Reform in India*, Delhi, p. 50.

19. Report of the 4th N. S. C., p. 19.

20. Report of the 4th N. S. C., App. pp. 60-62.

21. Report of the 5th N. S. C.

which were established in the late 19th century drew their leadership and followers initially not from traditional caste leaders but from western educated caste men, who were aware of social reform movement and for whom advancement of their castes implied adoption of modern social ideas.<sup>22</sup>

**B. The Muslim Social Reform Organisations :**

Social awakening among the Muslims took place at a slower rate than among the Hindus. There were political and religious factors for this slow growth. Before the advent of the British, the Muslims were the rulers of the country. Even after the downfall of the Mughal Empire they continued to feel that they comprised the ruling community in India. They were particularly hostile to the British and accused them of expropriating their political power. The unsympathetic and anti-Muslim policy of the British after the holocaust of 1857, intensified anti-British feelings among the Muslims. Consequently the gulf between the rulers and the Muslims widened. Dr Tara Chand stated that Muslims who became the special target of British hatred after the revolt naturally suffered most from its consequences.<sup>23</sup> The Muslims kept themselves away from any contact with the new system of education and culture. A. R. Desai remarked that this made the Muslims avoid any education which the British introduced in India.<sup>24</sup>

Owing to religious reasons, the Muslims in general opposed English education. Dr R. C. Majumdar gives the comparative position of the Hindus and the Muslims in relation to English education : 'In 1865, Hindus and no Muhammadan passed the M. A. Examination; 41 Hindus and 1 Muhammadan passed the B. A.; 17 students, all Hindus, passed the Law Examination. All Medical graduates were also Hindus. In 1867, 88 Hindus and not a single Muhammadan passed the M. A. and B. A. Examination.'<sup>25</sup>

By virtue of greater proficiency than that of the Muslims in English education, the Hindus captured almost all the Government offices. Jawahar Lal Nehru stated in this context that the Hindus took to this education more easily and were more influenced by western ideas. The subordinate government services and professions had far more Hindus than Muslims. Only in the Punjab, this difference was less marked.<sup>26</sup> In

22. Heimasath, Charles H. : *op. cit.*, p. 280.

23. Tara Chand : *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. 2., August 15, 1967, Delhi, p. 237.

24. Desai, A. R. : *op. cit.*, p. 264.

25. Majumdar, R. C. : *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. I, 1962, p. 39.

26. Nehru, J. L. : *op. cit.*, p. 320.

spite of this relative inertia among the Muslims, social reform movements sprang up among them. These movements raised their voice against Muslim orthodoxy in order to prove that there was nothing in the *Quran* which stood in the way the Muslims taking to English education and imbibing rational and advanced thoughts based on scientific knowledge of the west. The movements urged the Muslims to follow the same path of development which was propagated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

The 'School of Ulma,' which was originated prior to the Mutiny of 1857 became active and organised a mass movement against British rule with its centre at Shamli in the Muzaffarnagar district of U.P. Later on it was shifted to Deoband in Saharanpur district in 1867. Its primary object was to purify the religious practices of the people, to remove superstitions and un-Islamic elements from their midst, and to persuade them to lead their lives according to the injunctions as the *Quran* and the *Hadis*, the teachings and example of the Prophet.<sup>27</sup>

Side by side another group rose under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He was influenced by English education, civilization and culture of the west. According to him, 'English education, western thought and culture were the three foundations of all real progress.'<sup>28</sup> With this object in view, he founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference. In 1864, he organised the 'Translation Society', later on renamed as the 'Aligarh Scientific Society.' Mainly Muslims, government servants and some English officials were the members of the society. He also founded the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College' at Aligarh in 1877. Brick by brick he built the edifice of the co-operation of the Muslim autocracy with the British and their liking for English education.<sup>29</sup> Dr Rafiq Zakaria remarked that, in fact, he was convinced that without a close religious alliance between Christianity and Islam, the Indian Muslims were doomed.<sup>30</sup> The ideology of Syed Ahmad Khan and his followers, generally, is called the Aligarh Movement. For advancing his ideology and theory, he started two papers, the *Tahzib-ul-Akbar* and *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. Besides these, several other social organizations also came into existence. The 'Unjuman-i-Ismia' (religious society) was established by Maulvi Ulfat Husain, a teacher of Normal School, Delhi, for adopting measures for reform in the customs and ceremonies of Shia sect and re-marriage of

27. Tara Chand : *op. cit.*, p. 350.

28. Mujumdar, R. C., : *op. cit.*, p. 478.

29. Ram Gopal : *Indian Muslims : A Political History (1858-1947)*.

30. Dr Rafiq Zakaria : *Rise of Musalmans in Indian Politics*, p. 236.

## SOCIAL REFORMS IN U.P. AND PUNJAB, AND PRESS 1858-1910

widows.<sup>31</sup> According to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, the 'Anjuman-i-Akhlaq' society was founded at Aligarh.<sup>32</sup> The *Koh-i-Nur (Akhbar)* mentioned the 'Anjuman-i-Islamia' as a social reform organisation,<sup>33</sup> and a 'New Muhammadan Society' at Lahore, for the development of the Muslims.<sup>34</sup>

On April 1, 1872, the 'Muhammadan Society' was founded at Agra with the object of removing the extravagance in marriages prevalent among the Musalmans.<sup>35</sup> The *Albert Gazette* reported the establishment of a Muhammadan Committee by the name of 'Anjuman Akhwan-ul-Safa' at Gujranwala for learning and education among the Muhammadans and their social improvement.<sup>36</sup> A 'National Muhammadan Association' had already been established at Calcutta with the object of promoting the interests of Musalmans.<sup>37</sup> This 'National Association of Calcutta' sent a memorial to the government for relief and promotion of the Muslim community. The Muhammadans of the N. W. P. and the Punjab gave thank to the Association.<sup>38</sup> A meeting was held under the presidentship of Maulvi Muhammad Muhsin at Jaunpur on 25th November, 1888, for establishing the 'Anjuman-i-Islam' there with a view to reforming the Musalmans and rendering relief to their poor.<sup>39</sup> In the first decade of the 20th century, the 'Muslim League' was founded. These societies and associations not only made efforts to eradicate social and religious evils but also to check the conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

Consequently, these social organisations of Hindus and Muslims felt the importance of the press, and started newspapers to propagate social reform. A. R. Desai rightly observed the value of the press. "The press was an effective weapon in the hands of social reform groups to expose social evils, such as caste fetters, child-marriage, ban on remarriage of widows, social, legal and other inequalities from which women suffered. It also helped them to organise propaganda on vast scale against such inhuman institutions as untouchability. It became a weapon

31. *Nujm-ul-Akhbar*, 31 March, 1871—RNN : N. W. P. and Punjab 1871, p. 151.

32. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 30 June, 1871; *Ibid.*, 1871.

33. *Koh-i-Nur*, 2 Sept., 1871; *Ibid.*, 1871.

34. *Punjabi Akhbar*, 2 Sept., 1871; *Ibid.*, p. 532.

35. *Mufid-i-Am*, 1st April, 1872; *Ibid.*, 1879, p. 197.

36. *Albert Gazette*, 23 June, 1876; *Ibid.*, 1876, p. 312.

37. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, July 1878; *Ibid.*, 1878, p. 647.

38. *Aligarh I. G.*, 7 March, 1882—RNN.—N. W. P. and Punjab 1882, p. 156 and *Mashir-i-Qaisar*, 14 March, 1882; *Ibid.*, 1882, p. 161.

39. *Najm-i-Hind*, 10 Dec. 1888; *Ibid.*, 1888, p. 823.

in their hands to proclaim to the broad mass of the people, principles, programmes and method of democratic reconstruction of the Indian society. It was also by means of the press that social reformers all over the country were able to maintain a permanent discussion about the best programmes of the solution of social evils and to prepare for and hold All India Social Conferences with a view to chalking out common line.<sup>40</sup>

As a matter of fact the growth of our early papers was considerably stimulated by the public interest in social and religious questions—widow-remarriage, female education, female infanticide, superstitions, etc.<sup>41</sup>

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40. Desai, A. R. : *op. cit.*, p. 203.

41. Audit Bureau : *The History of the Press in India*, p. 33.

## Indian Revolutionaries in London (1908) and the Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh\*

DR M.M. AHLUWALIA

In the year 1907 the revolutionary movement in India had touched a new climax and intensity. The British Government employed all their resources to wipe out every trace of sedition and revolutionary activity. Some of the revolutionaries like Savarkar had already escaped to England, where they continued their work for the emancipation of the Motherland. Their important centre was known as the India House under the inspiration of Shyamji Krishnaverma, who founded the Home Rule Society.

In the year 1908, the revolutionaries took every opportunity to propagate their mission and to draw the Indian students in London within their fold. They held important meetings from time to time. On 10th May they commemorated the Rebellion of 1857 which was presided by Sardar Singhji Rewabhai Rana of the Shroff and Coy. In this meeting Savarkar delivered a very inspiring speech.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly the Indian revolutionaries in London made it a point to celebrate the Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh on 29th December, 1908.<sup>2</sup> In fact the revolutionaries were anxious to enlist the Sikhs for the cause of Indian freedom because they regarded them extremely important in relation to their ideas of means and methods. They were also conscious of the Sikh element in the British army. It had been one of their aims to win over the Indian soldiers to their side.

The aforesaid meeting was held at the Caxton Hall. The chair was taken by Bipin Chandra Pal, the famous Bengal revolutionary. He was supported by Lala Lajpat Rai, and Prof. Gokal Chand Narang. Prof. Narang spoke first and represented the Guru as a 'National Hero.' He was followed by Lala Lajpat Rai, who said :

The path of duty was fraught with danger and they should not hesitate to sacrifice their own lives. It was better to die than drag on such wretched live."<sup>3</sup>

\* *The Missionary* (13), October-December, 1962.

1. Deptt. of Home (Political-A) Profs : 148-50 of March, 1909 (Confidential).

2. *Ibid.* 3. *Ibid.*

Bipin Chandra Pal expressed the hope that :

"The Punjab was not yet dead and he could see in his mind's eyes the Sikhs, sword in hand sacrificing their lives and cry 'I have given my head but not my cause, my faith.'"<sup>4</sup>

He was followed by V. D. Savarkar who called upon the audience to "rise in body and die for their country's sake."<sup>5</sup> About this meeting Savarkar wrote to his brother in India the following famous words :

"The other day a banquet was given to all the Sikhs at the India House after the Shri Guru Gobind meeting. It produced a very good effect, indeed. By these meeting, a very good opportunity was secured to make all Sikh brethren of one mind. With the drawing of the idea that we (i.e., Sikhs and ourselves) are both descendants of Shri Guru Gobind, a thousand lectures began to be delivered at once in their hearts and ours!"<sup>6</sup>

On this occasion the revolutionaries brought out a special leaflet titled '*Bande Matram Khalsa*.' It may be reproduced below :<sup>7</sup>

"He whose soul no slavery fills,  
He who rides the fiery steed,  
And to righteous battle speeds,  
Saves weak, oppression kills;  
He is of the Khalsa,  
He alone, and none but he."

The leaflet described how in 1698-99 the young Guru assembled all his disciples from far and near at Anandpur Sahib and how he selected his first five disciples. He said :

"I want to soak this sword into the blood of man. The insatiable Goddess of Duty demands a blood sacrifice ! Is there anyone amongst you who will tear his heart out, and pour forth his blood instantaneously to propitiate the hungry Goddess ?"

Then the leaflet described how the Guru prepared *Amrita* with his *Khanda* and initiated his followers :

"He proclaimed a glorious Republic, based on the eternal verities of Unity of God and brotherhood of Man ! All the demoralising inequities that had crept into society were swept off, and the equality of man was restored. The Sikhs of the Guru are one—equal and free ! They all belong to the same caste—the caste of warriors, warring incessantly for

4. *Ibid.*

5. Deptt. of Home (Political-A), Profs. 135-7 of August 1909.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Deptt. of Home (Political-A), Profs. 148-50 of March 1909 (Confidential).

the triumph of truth, for the glory of God and for the liberation of man. Henceforth every man who drinks this *Amrita* ceases to be a coward and becomes a *Singh*—a lion ! To remind them of their divine mission of warring incessantly for the extirpation of injustice and oppression, they are under perpetual vow and *Sanyas*. All those who taste this Order of Immortality are '*Bhais*'—Brothers. They have got the same father, same mother, the same place of birth—Patna ! They partake of the *Parsad* out of the same bowl, they dress in the same uniform, they all are servants of the same '*Akal Purakh*'—the Immortal One, the Timeless Being ! Great was Plato, when he wrote his *Ideal Republic*, great was Sycurgus when he translated his military ideal into a gigantic face of a great Spartan State, but far greater is the Republic of this great Indian, the *Khalsa* of our Guru Gobind Singh ! A great Commonwealth rejecting the ignorance of the human nature of the first and the physical excess of the later, so beautifully balanced in its philosophic and practical aspects that Philosophy ceases to be weak, and becomes as sharp as a sword itself, and at the same time it becomes as philanthropic nurse.

"Such was the birth of *Khalsa* : The Guru himself tells us in his biography that he was sent to this earth 'for the glory of God and the liberation of man by extirpating the wicked and tyrannical.' Before death he said 'wherever five of my disciples assemble, they know me to be present.'

'My disciples' ! Oh ! Guru, where are those 'my disciples' ? To be your disciple, to be your Sikh, is to be a lion, a *Singh*, is to tolerate no oppression, is to be a life-long warrior—not to prostitute sword in the furtherance of wrong, but to consecrate it by the propagation of virtue. When, Oh ! when shall we find such 'my Sikhs' to the number of five—for then our Guru will be present amongst us, and when again Guru Gobind is present amongst us, good God ! then the woe and the degradation' and the downfall of our race and soil is gone for ever ! Indeed such five men as he breathed into life on that First Day of Baisakh are sufficient to ennoble a whole nation !

"Over the whole forest the jackal of famine and tyranny and treachery, are stalking victorious—where is the *Singh*, the lion, who at his thunders will assert the Lordship of his native soil ? This *Khalsa*, the Guru created as a sword in the hand of Mother Bharat. For Punjab alone the great Guru and his sons and followers poured forth their blood in unmeasured quantities—and now the whole body of the Motherland from Himalayas to Cape Comorin is dying, her life-blood sucked off ! Punjab where every stone has a tale of some Sikh martyrdom to tell;



Bengal, where Guru Tegh Bahadur and Nanak lived and preached; the Deccan, where the ashes of the Mighty Dead are treasured in by the Godawari, are groaning under the death disease Patna, the very birth place of the *Khalsa* is a weeping slave, and Anandpur, the city of joy, is buried under the heap of treachery and shame. The Guru told the Brahmins that to repeat the prayers is no *Dharma*, but to act the prayers is the real *Dharma*. Will he not hurl the same lance at us when he sees us repeating his prayers like parrots, unconcerned amidst the wailings and weepings of 3,00 million—as if that was a music keeping tune to our *Japji's* and *Shabads*. The sword which he gave to protect *Dharma* and *Desh*—has not that very sword traded on treachery ?

“A Sikh was held as a patriot by the Motherland at home and as a hero by the world abroad. But, Oh shame ! Now Sikh has become a synonym for a labourer or a *Kooli* on the coasts of both Pacific and the Atlantic.

But this cannot last long ! The Guru will not leave us. Then as he said, the sparrow shall kill the Hawks ! The trumpet call of duty is sounded and it is never too late to mend.

Therefore, awake, Oh *Khalsa*, arise, Oh *Khalsa* and never again shall we be fallen.

*Sat Sri Akal.”*

This was not a solitary attempt on the part of revolutionaries to win over the brave Sikhs. In the year 1909 they addressed a letter to all the Sikh units in the British army asking them to rise up for the liberation of the country. I began with the words :

“Where is the lion's roar which none could hush ? What has become of that sword of thine which was ever ready to destroy the rule of the wicked...”

And in these efforts, the Indian revolutionaries achieved substantial success. Many of the Sikh students in England joined the ranks. Harnam Singh, a student of the Agricultural College, Cirencester was expelled and the Nabha State withdrew his monthly scholarship of Rs. 250/—. His crime was that he refused to desist from wearing a badge having on it a *Bande Matram* flag of the motto ‘In memory of the Martyrs of 1857,’ which had been given to him by Savarkar. To what extent the Sikhs were drawn into the revolutionary movement may also be judged from the Ghadar Movement which originated in America; the revolutionaries had, no doubt, succeeded.

## The Sikh Problem in the Punjab, 1920-23\*

JOHN MAYNARD

The Sikhs are a religious community, not a race. Most, but not all of them, live in the Punjab and in the Native States, which are geographically, but not politically, part of the Punjab. They are very numerous in some districts, but they do not occupy a territory capable of being demarcated. They live intermixed with Hindus and Mohammedans. They constitute about one-eighth of the population of the Punjab, regarded as a geographical unit, less than one-ninth of that of the British Province which bears that name. Six Native States have Sikh rulers, and a substantial proportion of the aristocracy in the British Punjab is Sikh. These facts add to the political importance of the community and to the financial strength of its institutions. Sikhs serve in large number in the British Indian Army. During the Great War one in fourteen of the Sikh population in the Punjab served in it: a proportion ten times greater than that contributed by the population of India as a whole. They emigrated freely to North America and Australia till the movement was checked by unfavourable legislation. As police, watchmen, and mechanics, they go to Burma and the Far East in considerable numbers. The returned emigrants from Canada and the United States are numerous in the part of the Punjab which is known as the Doab, where they are a disturbing element.

Sikhism, regarded as a religious confession, had two founders. The first, Guru Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539) preached the Oneness of God, condemned all theories of his incarnation and the worship of idols, and denied the sanctity and privileges of Brahmans, the virtue of asceticism and the significance of caste, and described his own mission as that of "a third, set over the head of Hindu and Mohammedan, when both failed to carry out their duty." The fifth Prophet, or Guru, gave to the Sikhs a temporal organisation, with a system of regular taxation, and entered upon political activities by supporting the rebel son of the Emperor Jahangir. This new departure and the part subsequently played by the community in affairs of state, brought about a collision with the Moghul empire. The execution of the ninth Guru by the Emperor Aurangzeb led

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\* *Contemporary Review*, vol. 124, Sept. 1923, pp. 292-303.

to the second foundation of Sikhism as a militant community. Guru Govind Singh (A.D. 1666-1708) obliterated early associations by renaming the Sikhs as *Singhs* (Lions), by establishing a new rite of initiation with water stirred with a dagger, and by distributing the communion food to all out of the same vessel, a practice of profound significance in a country where caste is the normal social organisation, and separate eating and drinking the principal outward sign of it. In giving the baptismal nectar he said : "I change you from jackals to tigers... I will kill hawks with sparrows;" sentences which disclose the ambition of transforming the traditional submissiveness of the Hindu of the non-fighting classes, and have been singularly verified by the changes in appearance and character which is so often observed when the novice receives the vivifying suggestions of the Sikhs initiation. He prescribed for his *Singhs* five symbols, of which it is sufficient to note here the topknot in which the hair of the head and face is tied, and the *kirpan*, a weapon which is sometimes a miniature carried in the hair, sometimes a dagger not more than a foot in length, sometimes sword. Dying, he declared that he would have no human successor, and that in future the Guru would be the *Granth Sahib*, or Sikh Bible. At the same time he ordained that an assemblage of five orthodox *Singhs* should be the guide of the Sikh congregation, and so established the peculiar theocratic institution which is characteristic of the community. "I am always to be found in five orthodox *Singhs*. Where five orthodox *Singhs* assemble they form the highest spiritual body."

Every Sikh is not necessarily a *Singh*. There are Sikhs of the first foundation, and Sikhs of the second foundation. Put very crudely and very briefly, the controversy which has brought some members of the community into opposition to the Government is, at bottom, the question "what constitutes a Sikhs?" The reformer is a Singh, denying the title of orthodoxy to all who have not received the initiation of the tenth Guru and who do not wear his five symbols, asserting the complete separation of the Sikh religion from Hinduism, condemning respect for idols, and insisting upon the abrogation of the distinctions of caste for all who enter the Sikh brotherhood. On the other side stand a large number, probably a majority, but with very little of the conviction and the vehemence of the reformers, who are of latitudinarian complexion—regarding their religion merely as a purified and monotheistic form of Hinduism, with a sacred book of its own—having recourse to the ministrations of Brahmans at births, deaths and marriages—tolerating, or even paying respect to Hindu deities and their emblems—and regarding with aversion

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the admission to the communion bowl of members of castes which they regard as socially defiling. The incumbents of the Sikh Shrines, some of whom are members of monastic orders, are for the most part latitudinarians of the type described. But their position has also been morally weakened by laxity of conduct and the expenditure of the revenues of the Shrines (sometimes considerable) on personal gratifications. Who is entitled to control the Sikh Shrines, and their revenues? Is it the incumbent, who is actually in possession? Or is it the congregation? And if it is the congregation, where must we look to find the congregation? To the body of orthodox *Singhs*, initiated with the water of the dagger and wearing the five symbols? Or to the whole community of the Sikhs? And, if so, how shall we define them and mark them off from the Hindus; of whom so large a portion of them allege that they are a part?

Something has been said of the difficulty of defining a Sikh. But, from Sikhism to Hinduism, the passage of one faith into another is more finely graduated than can readily be conveyed in so brief a sketch as this. During the controversy which arose round the question of Shrines, it was made plain that many persons who ordinarily pass for Hindus regard themselves as followers of the Sikh Prophets, and reverence, and instal in their houses the Sikh Bible. Among Hindus of the Western Punjab these opinions and practices are so general as to be almost universal, but those who adopt them do not cease to be Hindus, do not cease to use the ministrations of Brahmans, and do not abandon the principles of caste. The controversy of the Shrines raises issues which touch Hindu sentiment outside of the Punjab in the centres where it is exclusively dominant; and it is possible that an administration which should be tempted to placate the Sikh reformers by too large concessions would arouse, in India at large, feelings in the sphere of religion which, ordinarily quiescent and tolerant, are yet of unmeasured influence and vitality.

No sketch of the Sikhs would be complete which omitted their memories as conquerors. First as an aggregation of loosely knot confederacies, which overran the centre and south-east in the decay of the Mogul power, and afterwards under the forty years' monarchy of a genius who gave them unity and empire, they have ruled the Punjab, and loyal and generous though their service has been to their successors, they do not forget the greatness of their past. In the British Indian Army, they have, since the Mutiny of 1857, played a distinguished part, culminating in the contribution made to the armies which won the Great War. If it is possible to over-estimate so noble a service as this, they appear

sometimes to fall into that error.

The separatist and iconoclastic side of Sikhism was long in abeyance. Hinduism, absorbent as ever, appeared to be in the process of reassimilating its dissentient. The principle of caste reasserted its influence, and Brahmans recovered their place in the social and religious life. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab and the embodiment of the spirit of the Sikh community, died, his widows underwent the rite of *sati*, and Hindu deities appear in his cenotaph. Similar emblems figure, unquestioned till of late, in many Sikh Shrines. About a generation ago the stricter principles of the early teachers, in particular those of the tenth Guru, the second founder, again awoke, and a central body with a group of local associations was founded to restore a purer type of religion. The principle of the British Government, embodied in legislation of 1863, is neutrality in religious affairs. When moved to do so by the proper parties the Courts will set aside corrupt incumbents and enforce the proper expenditure of funds. But it is an axiom of policy that the Executive Government should stand aside from the management of religious endowments and from interference in religious practices. The first object of this paper is to explain how, in spite of the formulation of this principle, a reforming section of the Sikh community has come into collision with Government. There are certain grievances, in particular the extent of the representation given to the Sikhs in the local Legislative Council, and the restrictions upon the manufacture of *kirpans* without licence and the legal definition of the weapon, apart from the grievance of the Shrines; but they cannot be dealt with in the limits of this paper, and the question of the Shrines overshadows all the rest.

The Golden Temple, with a group of five associated Shrines, has always been managed by a body of Sikhs, with a Sikh manager as the executive head. Owing originally to the dangers of political intrigue, a special arrangement was made in the early days of British rule, which was afterwards continued, with the acquiescence of the Sikh community, in the interests of the orderly and peaceful administration of the Shrine. For sixty years the Sikh manager was appointed by the British Government, and certain questions regarding the secular administration of the temple were as a matter of practice referred for decision to the chief civil officer of the district. It is natural that official orders on such questions should take the form of the maintenance of past practice. Orders based on this principle have the great merit of making an appeal to the common sense and natural conservatism of the mass. But when the questions raised are questions of radical reform, to which past practice is essentially

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antagonistic, the principle inevitably fails to satisfy; and when the manager, supported by the civil officer, countenanced Hinduisng practices of long-standing, in accordance with the sentiments of the large body of latitudinarian Sikhs, the reformers came to regard official control as an obstacle to the fulfilment of their aspirations and agitated for its removal. It was recognised that the long acquiescence of the Sikh community in the arrangements made for the administration of the Shrine had come to an end, and in the summer of 1920 the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab announced his intention of consulting the Sikh members of the Legislative Council, shortly to be elected, in connection with the impending introduction of the reformed system of administration, on a plan of future management. On this occasion, as frequently, the reformers showed themselves too impatient to wait. In September, Mahatma Gandhi attended a meeting of the Sikh League, a body formed to uphold the political interests of the Sikhs by constitutional methods. The meeting was addressed by politicians from, outside the province and by persons who had been convicted of offences in the Martial Law period and subsequently released, and it passed a resolution in favour of non-co-operation. The spirit of recalcitrance thus awakened manifested itself in the first direct action by Sikh reformers. A party occupied in October a portion of the Golden Temple, from which pronouncements issue with a kind of oracular authority to the community (1920).

No legal authority existed to oust the intruders, otherwise than by process in the Courts, and it was primarily for the persons aggrieved by the aggression, and not for the Government, to take proceedings. The Government, in consultation with the ruler of the premier Sikh State, decided to regularise the position by appointing a committee of Sikhs to draw up a scheme of management. This committee never submitted a scheme. It co-opted a number of additional members, assumed control of the Golden Temple without displacing the manager, and took the title of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which implies a control over all the Sikh Shrines. For the convenience of English readers, this committee is described in the rest of this article as the Central Religious Committee.

In the meanwhile the question of the management of the remaining Shrines not specially associated with the Golden Temple, had become acute. With these other Shrines, some two hundred and sixty in number, the Government had no connection similar to that which had, by long acquiescence of the community, existed with the Golden Temple; and, if resort had been had to the Courts and their decrees awaited and obeyed

by those interested, no clash with the reforming Sikhs could have arisen out of the disputes over these Shrines. Partly from disappointment over the delays and technicalities of the law, and partly from the influence of the doctrine of non-co-operation then advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, and impressed by him personally upon the meeting of the Sikh League in September, 1920, the reformers adopted direct action in preference to litigation, and began to take possession of the Shrines. When the rich Shrine at the birthplace of Guru Nanak, the Bethlehem of Sikhism, was threatened with attack, and the incumbent applied for assistance, it became necessary to decide whether, apart from the actions normally incumbent upon the Magistracy to prevent breaches of the peace and to adjudicate in cases of disputed possession, and from the functions of the Civil Courts in dealing with suits instituted before them, the Executive Governments ought to guard threatened Shrines or take steps to prevent aggression upon them (December 1920).

Apart from the decree of a Civil Court, which must be enforced with all the power of the State, there exists no legal authority to oust any person from any property, however, unlawful the method by which he has entered upon possession. He can be prosecuted for any offences which he may have committed, but that is all that can be done. On the other hand the law requires the police to interpose for the purpose of preventing offences of a serious character, of which criminal trespass is one. The practical question was whether, upon information that certain person were about to enter upon a Shrine and its property, for the purpose of carrying out certain reforms and making use of the property according to their own ideas and against the wishes of the incumbent, the police should be instructed to assume that an offence was about to be committed and to prevent its commission. Such instructions would always be dependent upon the existence of sufficient force to carry them out. Normally there is on an average only one constable to five square miles of territory in the Punjab. Later on additional armed police were recruited from the disbanded troops, and the strength of the force was thus increased by about 15 percent., while the political situation remained acute.

The question whether the police should be instructed, in the normal course of their duties, to prevent, when possible, the occupation of Shrines by the reformers, was at first decided in the negative. It was very desirable to preserve not only religious neutrality but also the appearance of it, and it was particularly desirable to make no appearance of favouring a class containing individuals of unsatisfactory character. The Police Act allows of the provision of special protection to a person who is prepared

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to pay for it : an arrangement which has the advantage of throwing upon him a part of the responsibility of determining the degree of his necessity. Government decided that protection, when necessary, and when possible, should be given upon these conditions, and that otherwise the incumbent should be left to his legal remedies in the Civil and Criminal Courts, including the usual process for the taking of security from persons believed to contemplate a breach of the peace.

The attack upon the Birthplace Shrine came nearly a fortnight earlier than it was anticipated, when no police were present. The district headquarters was twenty miles, and the nearest police station ten miles distant. A band of some one hundred and thirty reformers arrived at dawn, surprised the incumbent's guards and entered the enclosure of the Shrine. The incumbent's men, mounted from outside upon the flat roofs surrounding the enclosure, closed the gates and destroyed the attacking party, almost to a man, in circumstances of very great barbarity. Troops arrived from Lahore in the evening, the incumbent and a number of guards whom he had hired were arrested for flagrantly exceeding the right of private defence, and the Shrine was occupied. But Sikhs, in a frenzy of religious excitement, rushed to the spot from all parts of the central Punjab. It became evident that they would advance upon the troops and allow themselves to be shot down, a catastrophe which, in the existing state of feeling, might have permanently alienated the community. Accordingly the Shrine was made over to the control of a body of Sikh gentlemen presided over by one whose sympathies lay with the moderate reformers.

Suspicion and fanaticism ran wild. The commissioner of Lahore, an officer of high character, who had won the respect and confidence of all classes during many years of service in the great Sikh centre of Amritsar, was publicly charged with having connived with the incumbent for the destruction of the reformers; and similar charges were levelled against Government itself. Excited Sikhs continued to flock to the Birthplace Shrine in great numbers. They interfered with the police in the investigation of the case, and, suspecting the residents of the neighbourhood of connivance with the incumbent, they created so much alarm among them, that a general exodus of the villagers took place. It became necessary to recall the troops who had been sent away when the Shrine was made over to the reformers, and to deprive the Sikhs at the Shrine and in the neighbouring districts of the sticks and axes with which they were armed.

Further seizures of Shrines by the reformers followed, and Government now changed its policy, and adopted the principle of prevention of



impending attack. Those who committed offences in seizing Shrines were prosecuted, and a new grievance was established, which has continued, and has from time to time been renewed ever since, that the Government has imprisoned Sikhs for the crime of seeking reform in their Shrines.

The disadvantages of the policy of making an incumbent responsible for his own defence were illustrated by the tragic incident of the Birthplace Massacre. It is impossible to trust people to restrain themselves within the limits of lawful private defence, and any encouragement to use the right may produce results perilously close to civil war. The disadvantages of the policy of prevention, on the other hand, were vividly illustrated a year and a half later, when relays of Akalis present themselves daily for months to break the law by cutting wood in the disputed garden of a Shrine, and underwent, before the eyes of interested and admiring spectators, forcible dispersal or arrest. Prevention on this occasion gave the opening for a very effective demonstration which brought much odium upon Government, and completely rehabilitated the reformers, somewhat discredited by earlier events, in the eyes of the public. All India rang with the praises of the men who had submitted day after day to blows or arrest, without retaliation or resistance, and the fact that Government was engaged in defending the rights of an individual against unlawful aggression escaped notice in the outburst of sentiment. The jails were inconveniently crowded, and the arrangements improvised for the reception of prisoners gave opening for charges which were repeated with every variety of embellishment and exaggeration, till even the best friends of Government among Indians were convinced that there was justification for them.

In the meanwhile, from March 1921 to November 1922, Government, which always aimed at the separation of the religious from political grievances, had been engaged in the attempt to solve by legislation the question of the Shrines, and a series of bills were drafted, two of them at the express request of the Sikh members of the Legislative Council, with the object of meeting the views of moderate reformers. In March 1921, the Central Religious Committee declared its readiness to settle the dispute, if its control of all Shrines claimed as Sikh Shrines were recognised, if all property claimed as belonging to the Shrines were vested in them by law, subject to a provision for the maintenance of the incumbents, and if the right of succession on the existing system were abolished. These demands involved the confiscation, without inquiry, of all existing rights, and could never have been accepted either by Government or by the Legislative Council. No Sikh ever proposed to introduce

into the House a bill of his own, and from all the later discussions the Central Religious Committee held itself completely aloof, and claimed the release of Sikh prisoners as a condition preliminary to negotiation. Finally, the Minister of Education, to whose portfolio the managements of Shrines belongs, introduced and passed a bill, which proposed to establish a purely Sikh Board with power to inquire into the cases of disputed Shrines, and to take possession of them during a period of three years in which the jurisdiction of the ordinary Courts should be ousted. Hindus and Sikhs united to oppose this bill, the former because they did not desire any fresh legislation on the subject of the Shrines, and the latter because they desired more drastic provisions, contradictory motives, but sufficient to cement a temporary alliance between the rival interests. This act appears to have been used by the reformers as a means of pressure upon the incumbents of Shrines, to cause them to come to terms, but it was repudiated in public, and any Sikh who might become a member of the proposed Board was threatened with excommunication (November 1922).

It is convenient, from this point, to return to the events at the Golden Temple. The object of Government was to obtain the sanction of the Judicial Courts to its own withdrawal, and to the formulation of a scheme of management which should secure alike the interests of all classes of worshippers. For this purpose it was proposed to institute a friendly suit, and the Central Religious Committee was invited to send representatives to conference of Sikhs to aid in drawing up proposal. While these negotiations were pending, it was ascertained that the committee intended to take from the manager the keys of the Temple Treasury, with the evident object of confronting the Courts with the accomplished fact of completed possession. This would have prejudiced the case of the opposing section, and have tended to frustrate the aim of securing the proper consideration of all interests in the settlement. The Government, therefore, took over the keys, and announced that it would hold them pending the decision of the Court (November 1921).

A menacing outburst of feeling followed. Akalis flocked into Amritsar. Sikhs were told that Government had seized the keys of the Temple itself. Excited meetings were held in all Sikh districts, and leaflets charging Government with an attack upon religion were widely circulated among the civil population and in the army. The conservative wing in whose interests the keys of the Treasury had been resumed was cowed into silence, and into the appearance of acquiescence in the claims of the reforming party. An Act, which empowers the Chief Civil Officer to prohibit public meetings, was already in operation in three of the cent-

ral districts and a number of Sikh leaders were arrested and convicted for violating it.

The evident danger of the alienation of the Sikh community by the misrepresentation of the keys affair hastened the institution of the suit for the settlement of a scheme of management. The keys were deposited in the Court, and it was announced that Government was waiting to have them handed over to the Central Religious Committee, pending the conclusion of the suit. The Court invited representative Sikhs to assist in the formulation of a scheme, and the few who attended acquiesced in the claim of the Committee to be considered the representative of the community for religious purposes, and no contrary view was put forward by any Sikh body. It was impossible to maintain the contention that men who would not raise a voice on their own behalf were entitled to share in the administration of the principal Sikh Shrine, and Government decided to withdraw from the championship of their claims, and to terminate the affair by the unconditional release of those who had been convicted of participation in the meetings held for its discussion.

The general political situation at this time was at its worst, and in spite of some favourable symptoms (among which the regular payment of the land revenue and the great demand for Government currency notes were important) was one of extraordinary embarrassment (January 1922).

An unprecedented rise in the price of food grains, beginning in the second half of August and growing steadily worse, had predisposed the population of the towns towards disaffection. Wheat was double its pre-war price, and trade was extremely bad. Prosecutions of Mohammedan leaders in the Bombay Presidency had caused a recrudescence of strong feeling on the subject of the Turkish Empire and the supposed hostility of the British Government to its interests. The words for which the leaders were prosecuted were repeated by large numbers of persons, with much accompanying excitement and public demonstration of the solidarity of Hindus and Sikhs with Mohammedans in this matter. The falsehoods by which the agitation made its appeal to the masses, for instance the statements that the British had bombarded, and were in possession of the Mohammedan holy places of Mecca and Medina, were being sedulously kept alive. Mahatma Gandhi had collected two-thirds of a million sterling to serve as sinews of war, and continued to announce the establishment of Home Rule, understood by multitudes as the end of all troubles, including obligation to pay land revenue and taxes, by the end of the year. The country was full of thousands of disbanded and disgruntled soldiers. Violent crime ran unusually high. Civil disobedience was threatened in

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an intensive form. Opposition to the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales had culminated in serious riots with many casualties in Bombay. Following on outbreaks in other parts of India, a collision occurred in the south-east of the Punjab, between police and mob, in consequence of an attempt to rescue non-co-operator prisoners.

When to these difficulties was added a religious agitation of exceptional vehemence, affecting the community which supplies so large a fraction of the Indian army, the necessity of finding an early issue was urgent. Conciliation too frequently fails for lack of promptitude or for lack of completeness. In this instance, when the collapse of the latitudinarian opposition nullified the contention upon which depended the withholding of the keys, it was decided that conciliation should be both prompt and complete, and that those who had been imprisoned for speaking at meetings held in contravention of the Seditious Meetings Act should be released. It does not appear that a better situation would have resulted if Government, when acquiescing in the Court's delivery of the keys, had continued to keep in imprisonment those who had spoken against their retention, or that such a course could by any means have been justified.

The Akalis, a body of some twenty thousand men in all, owning a loose allegiance to the Central Religious Committee, lost their heads and such discipline as they possessed, after the triumphant conclusion of the keys affair. They marched about in bands, openly displaying sword and axes, terrorised villages and village officers, travelled in trains without payment, and in such numbers as to overawe railway officials, established village courts which inflicted barbarous punishments, declaimed violently against Government, and spoke openly of the coming rule of the Sikhs. At a sign of opposition, they concentrated for action, and the police in some districts became afraid to deal with them. Government held its hand during visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, because the police and troops were at that time very fully occupied. As soon as the necessary force was available, a simultaneous descent was made in thirteen districts on the leaders of dangerous bands, persons guilty of intimidation and violence, and those who had taken prominent part in meetings where seditious speeches had been delivered. One thousand one hundred and fifty-three persons were brought to trial. The Sikh Rulers of the Native States of Patiala and Kapurthala co-operated by taking similar action in their own territories. It is significant that no hands were encountered by the police making the arrests, that no necessity rose for using the troops except as a reserve, and that there was no

resistance of any kinds. The operation were quietly completed and the troops sent back to their cantonments by an early date in April (1922).

Isolated incidents of violence continued occasionally to recur, but the results of allowing the movement to run wild were appreciated by the leaders, and the re-establishment of discipline among their followers was illustrated by the remarkable demonstration which lasted for three months at the Garden Shrine outside Amritsar, who underwent dispersal and arrest during that period, for peaceable disobedience to the law. Their spokesmen always alleged that they were acting within their legal rights, and it has been a very important feature of the action against Shrines which has been undertaken by the Central Religious Committee during the past year that a colour of legality has always been given to it. Whether the success of the more extreme party in the recent elections to the Central Religious Committee will give the upper hand to the leaders of the Akali organisation, who desire a more drastic policy, is yet to be seen; but they have hitherto been held in check. The recent abdication of the Sikh ruler of the Nabha State in consequence of the disclosures made in the inquiry into the disputes between him and the Sikh ruler of Patiala, gave occasion for wild stories of the Akalis to march upon Nabha. Such a political adventure would have ended once for all the appearance to religious aims, and would thus have deprived the movement of its peculiar strength.

There is no reason for attributing to the Central Religious Committee or to the general body of the Akalis any connection with the movement of violence which has recently made its appearance in two districts, in which returned emigrants are numerous, but the Committee has been half-hearted in its condemnation, and has even suggested that the policy of the Government on the question of the Shrines and the treatment of the Akalis imprisoned in the jails are responsible for it. The gang which has murdered loyalists and terrorised the countryside is now hard pressed by troops and police, and the person who is believed to have been the brains of the organisation has been captured. There are other favourable symptoms. The Sikhs Community has never, in spite of the formal benediction bestowed by its leaders upon the principle of non-co-operation, acted upon the principle, either in education or in any other matter. The Mohammedan agitation on behalf of the Caliphate has lost all substance with the destruction of the temporal power of the Caliph by the Angora Assembly and with conclusion of peace at Lausanne. Three successive good harvests have brought the price of food grains to a pre-war figure, and deprived the political agitator of his audience in the towns.

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Violent crime, in particular, dacoity, extraordinarily high in 1912 and 1922, has fallen within normal limits. The financial difficulties of the Province remain, and may necessitate an addition to taxation which will cause discontent in an important class. The hostility between Hindus and Mohammedans has become so acute that the maintenance of peace in some areas is a matter of anxiety. But on the whole the outlook before the Punjab is less troubled than it has been for some years past.

# Sikhism in the Age of Science and Socialism

GURMUKH NIHAL SINGH†

## I

It is generally believed that the influence of Science and Socialism—of Western Education—is undermining the faith of the Sikh youth in their religion. Is it possible to counteract this influence and restore religion to its legitimate place in the hearts of our young men? This is a question which deserves serious consideration from those interested in promoting the balanced development of our youth.

In this connection, it is necessary to remember two points : (1) that youth is a period in which fancy naturally turns to other things than religion, when demands of love and adventure are more dominant than those of spiritual contemplation or religious worship; and (2) that there is inherent inconsistency between science and religion or socialism and religion. Noted scientists themselves do not see any conflict between science and religion and the change in the attitude of Soviet Russia towards the place of religion or Church in society is a sufficient indication of the fact that there is in reality no conflict between socialism and religion. However, it may be useful to further clarify the position to remove all misunderstandings from the public mind.

## II

Age is a factor of great importance in human life—there are generally wide differences of belief, thought and action between the young and old. It is true that the Gurus appeal to man in all stages of life—childhood, manhood and old age—to devote himself to *Nam Simran* (repetition of God's Name), but, in practice, it is only very seldom that in youth a person is truly devoted to God.

It must be recognised that the influence of environment is of great importance. If one is born in a family in which the elders live religious lives and spend a part of their time in *Hari Simran* and *Kirtan* (repeating the Name of God and singing His praises), the mind in youth naturally turns to religion and one acquires the habit of divine worship and devotion. But, even in such cases, adolescence has its own effects. When

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the new blood begins to course in the veins and the mind awakens to new ideas and needs, thoughts of religion and devotion go to the background and the forms and symbols of religion become irksome and appear irrational. This is accentuated by the influence of western education. The idea of God seems an old-fashioned superstition—utterly un-acceptable to the scientific mind. The persons becomes a sort of a Bohemian, a libertine, particularly in matters of love and sex. He often becomes a devotee of a new Trinity—'Wine, Women and Wealth'—and displays a greater ardour in worshipping at their altar than he had ever shown previously as a devotee of God.

If, in this way, an effort is made to understand the working of the mind of the youth in its modern environment, the doubting and unbelieving attitude of our educated young men—their profession of agnosticism and even atheism—will not appear strange or alarming. In the vast majority of cases this is generally a passing phase, whose duration can be curtailed through an understanding, sympathetic and loving treatment. Unfortunately, the attitude adopted by some of our elders is harsh, censorious and uncomprehending and often makes the young men obdurate and persist in their immature and wrong ways, and even to take pride in doing so.

In this connection, it may be pertinent to refer to the remarkable case of Mrs. Anie Besant. Shortly after her marriage with a clergyman, Mrs. Besant became an unbeliever and a free-thinker. With characteristic courage she abandoned her married life and took to the career of a social worker, a labour leader and a most eloquent preacher of atheism. She achieved fame and a high position as a companion and co-worker of Charles Bradlaugh. But when the impetuosity of early womanhood passed, and she came into contact with spiritual persons like Madame Blavatsky, a new light dawned upon her—she had a glimpse of the Truth and of the Undying Spirit—the life beyond. She turned another page in her life with a new boldness—discarded atheism and took to her theistic studies. She came to India, studied India's systems of philosophy and religion and became a most inspiring and effective preacher of religion and the ancient Indian culture. For many years she guided the world organisation of the Theosophical Society, as its respected and powerful president. There are a large number of similar cases on a somewhat lower plane, or less outstanding, both in the west and the east. Adolescence, particularly in the modern scientific and socialist age, certainly has an upsetting effect on the mind of the youth, disturbs the mental equilibrium—and the pendulum swings to the other extreme; but nature has its own



way of restoring the balance in due course of time. However, the process is often expedited and helped either by some accident or by a misfortune or by a chance meeting with a highly evolved personality—a sage or a saint—the veil of mist surrounding the mind gradually lifted and one has a glimpse of the divinity within. When once a breach in the wall round the ego is made, the process of self-knowledge and reality begins. *Satsang* and *Nam Simran* help the onward march to self-realisation. But often this process of spiritual awakening is retarded by the uncomprehending and censorious attitude of the elders. Bigotedness and downright preaching, public condemnation and censure has done more harm in this respect than the scientific education, socialist thought, propaganda, and the modern spirit, all put together. What is, therefore, required is a wise leadership and comprehending, sympathetic and loving attitude towards the problems of adolescence and of contact of the young mind with western ideas and thought.

### III

It is said that 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' This is also true in the case of scientific knowledge. Often a smattering of it makes us believe that science and religion are so opposed to each other that there is no meeting ground between them. Some go further and think that what can not be proved by the use of the scientific and experimental methods is not true knowledge. However, noted scientists think differently. They are fully aware of the limitations of science and the scientific method. Science can explain only the world of the matter, and the world of the Spirit, *Atma* (Soul)—is beyond its ken. Its knowledge cannot be acquired through the use of the scientific method. During the last sixty years science has made miraculous progress but the scientists are aware that they have still to go a long way to unfold the mysteries of the Universe. Who knows what is beyond ?

In any case, it is being increasingly recognised, both by men of science and religion, that the world of matter and that of the spirit are two separate entities—the knowledge of the one is acquired through science and of the other through religion; and for the progress of man the help of both science and religion is necessary. However, what is sometimes forgotten is that each has its own spheres and boundaries and most of the difficulties arise because the limits are disregarded. If, therefore, these limits are respected, the so-called conflict between science and religion disappears; and, through science and religion, balanced progress can be achieved.

IV

Similarly, there is no real or inherent conflict between religion and socialism. It is true that during the past century things had so conspired that the socialist leaders came to regard the Church as their greatest enemy and this state of affairs lasted till the forties of the present century, although some of the prominent socialists were deeply religious men. But things have changed since then. Even Soviet Russia abolished all restrictions previously imposed upon the Churches and the preaching of religion.

It appears to me that the main fault for the earlier state of affairs lay with the custodians of the Church. For their personal gain they supported the capitalistic order and the rich ruling classes. They drugged the people with the belief that poverty and adversity were divine and that it was the sacred duty of the poor to remain happy and contented in the midst of misery, squalor and suffering—they should not agitate or make any effort to change the order which is ordained by God. Some of them even went to the length of preaching that poverty was preferable to riches—in poverty man remembers God, in wealth he is apt to forget him. Has not Christ himself said, "The rich cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven"? Under these circumstances it was natural that socialist leaders like Marx and Lenin should call religion as 'the opiate of the poor.'

On the other hand, the socialist leaders regarded poverty as the mother of all ills or sins and the capitalistic order chiefly responsible for poverty and its consequences—crime and other evils. But the Churchmen stood in their way and in the name of religion and God they asked the poorer classes to refrain from agitation or organize themselves to overthrow the existing order. Socialist leaders in Europe, therefore, became the sworn enemies of organised religion and its professionalised custodians. However, there was never any antagonism between socialism and true religion as such, which, like Sikhism, promotes equally the spiritual as well as the moral and material welfare of its followers. As a matter of fact, the goal of both religion and socialism is the same—the all-round development of man.

It is true that in this imperfect world it is rare to find a well-balanced and a fully developed personality. Generally one is apt to go to one or the other extreme. Those who take to religion seriously often neglect their worldly duties and material progress. Sometimes they renounce the world, leaving behind them their families, who become the responsibility of others—ultimately of society. They themselves undergo physical pain and tribulations and subject themselves to all sorts of privations and sufferings to conquer the cravings of the flesh. While there are others who

become far too worldly and neglect their religious and moral life. They become strangers to all these virtues—honesty, truth, love, honour, friendship and fellow-feeling—which make man akin to God. They resort to all types of evil practices and seem to forget altogether that they have a soul within which requires its spiritual food. Unfortunately, in a hurry to get on in the world and become rich quickly, many of our young men are tempted to follow in the foot-steps of the so-called 'worldly-wise.' It is, therefore, necessary to place before our youth the Sikh ideal of balanced growth and lasting progress, preached by our Gurus.

According to the Sikh Gurus, for the attainment of salvation it is not necessary to renounce the world or to run away from their worldly duties and responsibilities. Worldly progress and material prosperity are not incompatible with spiritual greatness or moral well-being. As it has been put by the Gurus—"Salvation can be achieved within the family, in the midst of a life of plenty and prosperity—good food, dress, play, laughter and worldly enjoyment—through devotion and *Nam-Simran*."

### V

There is, however, one important question, which is often asked by our youth and non-Sikhs : Is it really necessary for achieving the Sikh goal of self-realisation to keep long hair and the other Sikh symbols—the five K's (*Kakaars*)—*Kuchh*, *Kanga* and symbolic *Kirpan*, *Kara* and *Kesh* ? They are not troubled about the first three, as they are not noticeable from outside. The fourth *Kara* is regarded by them as a convenient ornament—its thickness varies according to fashion and is sometimes made of gold. The issue thus narrows down to one symbol—the keeping of long hair and untrimmed beard

This question may be reviewed from two different stand-points :

First, it may be recognised that individual progress can not be achieved apart from Society. This is particularly true of spiritual progress, which is promoted through *Satsang*—congregational devotion and worship. In the vast majority of cases spiritual awakening is brought about through *Satsang* or the company of the holy. The torch of divine light is lit by contact with a Spirit aflame—a soul in human bondage learns to be free and soar heavenwards from a liberated and a highly evolved personality with magnetic attraction. It is for this reason that the Sikh Gurus emphasize the value of *Satsang* and of keeping company with holy persons or persons who have achieved spiritual progress. A person joins a religious society also for the same reason and accepts its rules and discipline and takes to a life of social service and *parupkar*. The tenth Guru founded the *Khalsa* to live a life of religious discipline and social service.

He gave the Sikhs a distinct form, the five symbols to emphasize valuable principles and human virtues, made it obligatory to recite *Gurbani* atleast thrice a day and taught them to be prepared for social service and sacrifice by his own example—by the sacrifice of his father, mother and all the four sons. Guru Gobind Singh initiated the baptism of the sword and infused a new and undying spirit in his brave Sikhs and turned them into great warriors in the noble cause of justice and spiritual freedom. Each one of them ready to jump into the fray, irrespective of the odds against him, with the name of God and the Gurus on his lips and a *Khanda* (sword) in his hand, ready to give his life in defence of freedom of conscience and religious worship and for uprooting irreligion and tyranny in the world. Every Sikh should feel it a privilege to belong to such a fraternity and observe gladly all its rule and discipline.

The sacrifices made by the Sikhs are not a mere matter of tradition or history. As a matter of fact, the Sikhs were able to establish a new record in martyrdom in the struggle to free their places of religious worship in the twenties of the present century and in the Nation's fight for freedom. The Sikhs also made the heaviest sacrifice during the partition of the country and in stemming the tide of the invaders in Kashmir and in NEFA and Ladakh during the Chinese aggression in October and November 1962. And what is even of still greater importance is that there are present among the Sikhs today highly evolved religious personalities contact with whom can light the lamp of divine love in the hearts of poor mortals like ourselves and direct us to the path that leads to the Abode of Truth—*Sach Khand*.

Second, there is another way of looking at the question raised at the beginning of this section. There are several respected persons amongst us, who are great lovers of *Gurbani* and firm believers in the teachings of the Gurus and the path to self-realisation pointed out by them, who are convinced that it is possible for a person without keeping long hair and receiving the baptism of the sword to achieve self-realisation and be as good Sikhs as any *Amritdhari*. Like others, they believe in praying for Divine Grace and with it keeping the company of the holy, attending Sikh congregations in Gurdwaras, singing and hearing the praises of the Lord, doing *Nam-Simran* and *Bhagti*, living a life of Service, Truth, Love and Sacrifice and following the path pointed out by Guru Nanak—stage by stage—through *Dharam Khand*, *Gyan Khand* and *Saran Khand* to *Sach Khand*, the Abode of Eternal Truth. It is their contention that before the initiation of the Baptism (*Pauhal*) by the Tenth Guru, a large number of Sikhs had achieved spiritual greatness and salvation by following the

path pointed out by Guru Nanak in *Japji Sahib*. Even in the realm of sacrifice there have been illustrious men like Bhai Mati Das. In recent times there are a large number of devoted lovers of *Gurbani* and Sikhism, particularly, among the *Sindhis* and *Sahijdhari* Sikhs and Sikhs from *Pothohar*. Therefore, there does not appear to be any doubt, that self-realisation is possible without keeping long hair and receiving the Sikh baptism. But what may not be above doubt is the continuance of Sikh culture and traditions of sacrifice and service and undaunted courage, bravery and qualities of leadership associated with the great name of the *Khalsa*, without the baptism of the sword and observing the forms, symbols and discipline of an *Amritdhari* Sikh. My personal view is that, in this age of communal bigotry and rivalry, particularly, forms and symbols are necessary for all that is valuable in Sikh history, tradition and culture. I do not share the view expressed by a brilliant Sikh writer a few years ago that Sikh symbols in their present form are bound to disappear. However, I recognise that some of our educated young men may continue to discard the outward form and their continuing to follow the teachings of the Sikh Gurus will depend upon the general attitude of the Sikh public towards them. I believe in trying to win them back by love and persuasion, by *parchar* of the right type.

## Genesis of the Bhakra Dam Scheme (1914-1948)

DR YASH PAL BAJAJ\*

Bhakra Dam, characterised as something tremendous, stupendous and a symbol of India's progress by Jawaharlal Nehru while dedicating it to the nation on 22nd October, 1963,<sup>1</sup> when originally conceived, was only a water storage scheme. There was no proposal to generate hydro-electric power from it. The Dam derived its name from the village Bhakra situated in the erstwhile state of Bilaspur. High rocks around it formed a natural sloping lake covering an area of about 80 square miles. River Sutlej fell into this lake and then passed through a narrow rocky passage of 200 to 300 yards. To begin with it was envisaged to block this passage and harness the arrested water for irrigating the drought-prone south-eastern belt of the Punjab.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the origin of the scheme a confusion has been created by the statements reported in the press and made by the Punjab Legislators during the twenties and thirties of the present century. While according to an editorial of the *Jat Gazette*, it originated during 1907-12,<sup>3</sup> an article given in the *Souvenir Bhakra Nangal Power Houses* says that the scheme originated in the first decade of this century.<sup>4</sup> From the speeches of late Sir Chhotu Ram and Pandit Nanak Chand, it seems that the idea was conceived during 1914-15.<sup>5</sup> According to another view the scheme originated as a result of one of the recommendations of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18), namely, the Government should undertake immediately a hydrographic survey in order to ascertain the hydro-electric resources of the country.<sup>6</sup> Of these views, first two are

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1. *Cit.*, in the *Tribune*, Chandigarh, 22.10.1974.

2. *Jat Gazette* (urdu), Rohtak (hereafter cited as *J.G.* (tr.), 7/12/1927, p.3; also *Punjab Legislative Council Debates* (hereafter abbreviated as *P.L.C.D.*), Vol. XI, 5/3/1928, p. 426; also Vol. XV, 20/3/1930, p. 712; Vol. xxii, 11/11/1932, p. 324; also Sohan Lal, (*Development of Irrigation in the Punjab*, p. 22 (Lahore, 1925), also *Souvenir Bhakra Nangal Power Houses*, pp. 9, 19 (Patiala, nd.).

3. *J.G.* (tr.), 7/12/1927, p.3.

4. *Souvenir Bhakra Nangal Power Houses*, op.cit., p. 9.

5. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 27/2/1929, pp. 520 and 523.

6. *Op. cit.* in *Souvenir Bhakra Nangal Power Houses*, op.cit., p. 79.

mere conjectures as these are corroborated by no other evidence. Years 1914-15 seem to be correct because this view is strengthened by other contemporary evidences.<sup>7</sup> Firstly, in their speeches Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, Lala Jyoti Prasad and many more legislators referred repeatedly to 1914-15 as the years of the origin of this scheme. Secondly, in 1915 Punjab Government had appointed a Special Officer to find out the ways through which irrigation could be provided to the dry lands of the districts of Hissar, Rohtak and Karnal as a reward for their war efforts. Thirdly, the correspondence from May 29, 1916, to January 12, 1918, among the Secretary, Public Works Department, Punjab Accountant General, Punjab, the Secretary, Public Works Department of the Government of India, Finance Department of the Central Government and the Comptroller General of India on the moot point whether Punjab Government could spend Rs. 1,66,229 chargeable to '43' Minor Works and Navigation (Provincial) without the prior permission of the Central Government on the survey, etc., of the proposed Bhakra Storage Reservoir, Sutlej River, clearly proves that the scheme had been conceived by the Government during 1914-15.

The above referred Special Officer of the Punjab Government after completing survey of the proposed site during 1915-18 submitted his report to the Government in 1919.<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer referred to this project many times in his speeches during 1916-19. For instance, he declared at the Rohtak *darbar* held in his honour in January 1919, that the forests of Hissar and Rohtak would be turned into smiling fields. In that year itself a detailed Report of the project was prepared. But thereafter nothing was heard about it till 1924. Rather doubts were expressed about the solidity of the site-rocks and the Government did not consider the project economical.<sup>9</sup> It was Rai Bahadur Chhotu Ram who considering it the first charge on his public welfare efforts, re-opened the Bhakra Dam Scheme in 1924.<sup>10</sup> Through his resolu-

7. Finance Department, Finance and Accounts, File No. May 1919-1855 ? (National Archives of India, New Delhi); also *PLCD*, Vol. x, 15/3/1927, p. 454; Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 769; Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1936, p. 693; also *J.G.* (tr.), 20/4/1927, p. 5.

8. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxii, 25/2/1929, p. 336.

9. Sharma, S.R., *Haryana Ka Itihas* (urdu), p. 66 (Rohtak, 1966); also Gurdit Singh and Swaran Singh, *Effects of Bhakra Dam Irrigation on the Economy of the Barrani Villages in the Hissar District* 1960-61, p. 9; also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. viii, 7/3/1925, p. 14; Vol. x, 15/3/1927, p. 454; Vol. xi, 5/3/1928, p. 424; Vol. xii, 27/2/1929, p. 520; also *J.G.* (tr.), 7/12/1927, p. 3.

10. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 758; also see Report of Sir Chhotu Ram Kanya High School, Duhai (District, Meerut), p. 5 (Duhai, n. d.).

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tion of 28 February, he impressed upon the Government to immediately commence work on it. So forceful were his arguments that the Government accepted the resolution although with the amendment that the Thal Project would have precedence over the Bhakra Scheme.<sup>11</sup> When he became Minister for Agriculture in September of the same year, he called for the files relating to this project and himself went to inspect its site.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, agriculturists of Haryana districts, under his guidance, repeatedly asked the Government to give a practical shape to the project at the earliest. To cite few examples, when in 1925, Sunder Singh Majithia (Revenue Member), in 1926, Fazl-i-Husain (Revenue Member) and in 1927, Firoz Khan Noon and Joginder Singh (both Ministers) visited Rohtak, the agriculturists of the area emphasised in the addresses presented to them, that the execution of the Bhakra Project should be taken up immediately.<sup>13</sup>

The arguments for taking up the project at the earliest date, as deducible from contemporary sources and put forth by the advocates of the scheme — among whom prominent were Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, Pir Akbar Ali, Mohammad Hussain, Chaudhri Duli Chand, Lala Jyoti Prasad and Chaudhri Allah Dad Khan — can be summed as under :

(i) There were irregular and scant rains in the south east Punjab in general and in Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon districts in particular. For example, average rainfall for the district of Hissar for the years 1923-24 to 1938-39 was 15.85 inches, while average rainfall for the corresponding period for the whole province stood at 25.31 inches.<sup>14</sup> As a result of poor rains, crops always got damaged and resulted almost in regular famines in those areas. For instance, 1,243,000 cattle perished in Ambala Division in the famine of 1900. Of them, 448,000 died in Hissar District alone.<sup>15</sup> That apart, economic distress resulting from unemployment during such famines in these areas was heart-rending. Famine relief works started by the Government seldom absorbed all the

11. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. vi, 28/2/1924, pp. 183-84, 187.

12. Ram, T., *Sir Chhotu Ram—Apostle of Hindu-Muslim Unity*, p. 7 (Lahore, 1946); also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 27/2/1929, pp. 521-22.

13. *J.G.* (tr.), 25/11/1925, p. 7; 7/12/1927, p. 3; 10/8/1927, p. 3.

14. These references have been calculated from the statistics given in *Agricultural Statistics of the (British) Punjab, 1901-2 to 1935-36*, Table 3 (Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Lahore, 1937); also Supplements 1, 2, 3 to Publication No. 52, Table 3 (Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab, Lahore, 1940).

15. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 768; also see Vol. vi, 28/2/1924, p. 183; Vol. xi, 5/3/1928, p. 424.



labour available at such cheap rates as 5 pice, 4 pice and 3 pice per day per man, woman and child, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

(ii) The only irrigational facility available to these tracts was from the tributaries of the Western Jumna Canal but even these did not work satisfactorily. The reason having been that the river Jumna from which these tributaries derived benefit, had the largest degree of variation, vis-a-vis other rivers of the provinces. For example, during 1901-2 to 1921-22, it varied between 1,350 and 2,894 cusics.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the sinking of wells in this part of the Punjab, the task was almost impossible because even at a depth of 120 feet only brackish water was to be found.<sup>18</sup>

(iii) It was due to this acute scarcity of irrigational facilities that the land of these areas, though one of the most fertile ones in the province, could not solve even the fodder problem of its livestock. But properly irrigated fields of this zone yielded as much as 40 and 27 maunds of wheat and cotton per acre, respectively.<sup>19</sup>

(iv) Even backwardness of the Haryana districts was also, by and large, due to the lack of irrigational facilities. Thus the progress of this region, to a large extent, depended on the execution of the Bhakra Dam Scheme.<sup>20</sup>

The first result of the persistent efforts of the advocates of the scheme during 1923-26 was the assurance given by the Governor of the Punjab to the effect that in case the experts declared the site suitable, finances would be no problem.<sup>21</sup>

As it became essential to study the system and sites of the dams in U.S.A. and to consult some American experts on the suitability of the Bhakra-site, the Punjab Government sent a Special Officer to the States in 1926. Next year (on November 11) the American expert landed at Bombay.<sup>22</sup> After studying the site with the assistance of two officers of the Government of India and one of the provincial Government, he sub-

16. Chaudhri Chhotu Ram's speech in the Punjab Legislative Council on 27/3/1933, vide P.L.C.D., Vol. xxiii, p. 763.

17. Thopson, W.P., *Punjab Irrigation* (Lahore, 1925); also P.L.C.D., Vol. x, 15/3/1927, pp. 454-56.

18. P.L.C.D., Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 763.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 788; Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1966, pp. 693-94.

20. Chhotu Ram's letter to the Chief Secretary, Punjab Government, dated 11/3/1933, cit., in Shastri, R. S., *Chaudhri Chhotu Ram—Jeevan Chrit* (Hindi), p. 400 (Rohtak, 1965).

21. Ram. T., *op.cit.*, p. 7; also J.G. (tr.), 7/12/1927, p. 3; also P.L.C.D., Vol. xii, 27/2/1929, pp. 522-24.

22. J.G. (tr.), 20/4/1927, p. 5; 16/11/1927, p. 4; 7/12/1927, p. 3.

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mitted to the Punjab Government a detailed report in January 1928.<sup>23</sup>

In his report, the American expert not only approved the site but also recommended that the height of the Dam could be raised to about 500 feet instead of 395 as planned earlier.<sup>24</sup> Thus the storage capacity of the Dam was to be enhanced from 2.75 million foot-acres to 4.5 million sufficient for 12,500 cusecs discharge for six months in a year.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the area to be irrigated by this Dam also increased from about 6 million acres to 12 million.<sup>26</sup> Out of it 4.7 million acres were to come under irrigation for the first time. Of this approximately 3 million acres were to be covered by perennial and non-perennial irrigation in the Punjab. Out of the rest, nearly 0.8 million acres belonged to the Punjab States of Patiala, Jind, Faridkot, Malerkotla and Nabha and almost the same acreage belonged to Bikaner State. The Punjab areas proposed to benefit from this scheme extended from Delhi to Hissar and further stretched to the boundaries of the tracts to be irrigated by the proposed Sutlej valley project. Besides, Bhakra was to increase the intensity of irrigation in the areas already irrigated by the Sirhind Canal and Western Jumna Canal.<sup>27</sup>

However, in spite of the approval of the site of the Dam and its obvious benefits, firm decision was not taken to execute the project until 1945 due to the objections of the parties concerned and the indifference of the Provincial Government and the Central Government. Bombay Government objected to the scheme on the ground that if Sutlej water was allowed to be stored in Bhakra, it would lower the water-level of Indus and thus hamper the functioning of its inundation canals from Sind boundary to Sukkur.<sup>28</sup> The ruler of Bilaspur stood in its way by refusing to accept British tract in Nilibar as compensation for surrendering the

23. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 3/12/1928, p. 274.

24. The proposed height of the Bhakra prior to 1928 varied from 360-400 feet. Thereafter in 1933 its height was revised to 545 feet which was further increased to 680 feet in 1948. *Vide P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 25/2/1929, p. 337 and 397; Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 758; Vol. xviii, 6/3/1931, p. 323; Vol. xiv, 3/12/1929, pp. 605-6; also Raj, K.N., *Some Aspects of Bhakra Nangal Project*, p. 47 (New Delhi, 1960).

25. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 25/2/1929, p. 337; also Press Communique of the Punjab Government published in *Pioneer*, Allahabad, 10/7/1929 and also *cit.* in *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xv, 20/3/1930, pp. 714-16.

26. *J.G.* (tr.), 15/10/1927; p. 4; also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 25/2/1929 p. 337.

27. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, pp. 758-59 and 774; Vol. xii, 25/12/1929 and 27/2/1929 pp. 336 and 524; also Sohan Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

28. Gurdit Singh and Swaran Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-10; also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 25/2/1929, and 27/2/1929, pp. 336, 519-20; Vol. xv, 20/3/1930, pp. 714-16; also the *Tribune*, Lahore, 1/8/1929, pp. 2 and 15; also Sohan Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

Bhakra site.<sup>29</sup> Similarly the Punjab States, who themselves were to reap immense benefits from the scheme, obstructed its execution by imposing the condition that they would give their share only if the Punjab Government guaranteed a minimum annual return of 7% on it.<sup>30</sup> The State pertaining to Sirhind Canal refused to allow any changes to be made in its course. But without these alterations the scheme could not be proceeded with because the water of Bhakra was to be impounded in the Sirhind canal-head at Rupar and a canal was to be dug at Aliwal for irrigating the areas of Ferozepur, Hissar, Rohtak and Bikaner.<sup>31</sup> The Punjab Government resorted to delaying tactics during 1930-35 and gave the following flimsy arguments : <sup>32</sup>

(i) Bhakra Dam would prove uneconomical.

(ii) There was financial stringency in the province. Henry Craik, Finance Member, Punjab Government, elucidated the point in 1933 by saying that in the completion of Sutlej Valley and Mandi Hydro-electric projects, the debt of the Punjab Government had piled up to Rs. 35 crores which was thrice the annual revenue receipts of the province. So he suggested that instead of executing the big project of Bhakra, some smaller scheme sufficient to irrigate the areas of British Punjab connected with the Bhakra Dam, should be taken up.

(iii) A breach in Bhakra Dam would submerge Hoshiarpur district and the States of Bilaspur and Patiala.

Another important reason for delay in the execution of the scheme seems to have been the differences within the Unionist Party since 1926 due to which it received a set-back in the elections of 1930.<sup>33</sup> For example a Unionist M. L. C. Chaudhri Allah Dad Khan accused Sir Sikander Hyat for this delay in his speech in the Punjab Legislature on 27 March, 1933. He said, "The Revenue member (Sikander Hyat) who is the head of the department is a zamindar himself; and it is surprising that he has not moved fast enough...The Revenue member has been in office ever since 1929 or 1930, and he seems to have done nothing in the matter. Four precious years have been wasted."<sup>34</sup> During these years

29. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 762; Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1936, p. 696.

30. Speech of Henry Craik, Finance Member, Punjab Government in the Punjab Legislative Council on 27/3/1933. *Vide ibid.*, Vol. xxiii, pp. 771 and 776.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 766 and 786.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 770-71, 78, 80, 90; Vol. xxii, 11/11/1932, p. 384.

33. For details see Hussain A., *Fazl-i-Husain—A Political Biography*, pp. 160, 62, 268-78 (Bombay, 1946).

34. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxiii, pp. 770-71.

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the economic viability of the project was also challenged even by some such Unionists as had supported the scheme hitherto. Sikander Hyat and Muhammad Hyat Qureshi held out this type of attitude in their speeches of 11 November, 1932 and 27 March, 1933, respectively.<sup>35</sup>

But interesting enough contemporary provincial politics which had deprived the Bhakra scheme of the support of a section of the Unionists, brought in the active support of the Hindu Sabha since 1927. To begin with, Hindu Sabha used this scheme as an election dodge mainly due to three reasons. Firstly, Chaudhri Baldev Singh who was elected in 1926 from North-West Rohtak and had become a Unionist soon after his election, joined their party in 1927.<sup>36</sup> The statement of Dr Gokul Chand Narang in the Punjab Legislative Council on 28 February, 1929, clearly vindicates this argument. He said that since Chaudhri Baldev Singh joined their Party, they got interested in the Bhakra project.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, some of the tracts to be irrigated by Bhakra formed parts of the constituencies of the members of this party. In this context, speech of Lala Sewak Ram in the provincial legislature on February 28, 1929, is very significant. He said that he had moved a resolution for an early execution of the project because around 500 of his voters lived in the areas to be covered by this scheme.<sup>38</sup> Thirdly, leaders of the Hindu Sabha wanted to make political capital out of the differences of the Unionists by bringing about voters' pressure on those Hindu Unionists who represented areas proposed to be irrigated by the Bhakra Dam. They hoped that thus Hindu Unionists would join Hindu Sabha. Simultaneously, they held out during 1927-36 many allurements to Chaudhri Chhotu Ram, the Hindu leader of the Unionists, if he agreed to join hands with them.<sup>39</sup> Though they failed in winning over Chhotu Ram but they continued to support the Bhakra project as is evident from their speeches in the Punjab Legislative Council and thereafter in the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

Now coming to the reaction of the advocates of the scheme—Chhotu Ram, Pir Akbar Ali, Allah Dad Khan, Sayad Muhammad Hussain, Mian Nurullah, Sajjan Kumar Choudhry, Khan Haibat Khan Dahi, E. Maya Das, Chaudhri Tek Chand, Khan Bahadur Sardar Habib Ullah, Khwaja Muhammad Eusoof, Gokul Chand Narang, Lala Jyoti Prasad, Rai Bahadur Lala Sewak Ram, Rai Bahadur Lala Ganga Ram, Pandit Nanak

35. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxii, p. 384; Vol. xxiii, pp. 771-72.

36. Shastri, R.S., *op.cit.*, p. 152 also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 27/2/1929, pp. 521-22.

37. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, p. 546. 38. *Ibid.*, p. 547.

39. Ram, T., *op.cit.*, pp. 11 and 17; also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xiv, 20/9/1929, p. 239.

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given their consent long ago.<sup>44</sup> Government's unsympathetic attitude is also evident from a statement of the Revenue member, Punjab, that he made in the provincial legislature. He informed the House on 19th March, 1936, that the government had not written to the ruler of Bilaspur for the past whole year.<sup>45</sup> Similarly during the financial years 1930-31 and 1931-32 only Rs. 460,000 were spent on the survey connected with the scheme, while budget provisions for these years totalled Rs. 799, 200.<sup>46</sup>

Against Government's explicit objections to the scheme that it was uneconomic and the finances of the province were in a bad shape, the advocates of the project argued that these were mere pretexts. In fact, the Government was not interested in executing it. Regarding its economic aspect, they rightly reasoned that even the Chief Engineer, Irrigation, Punjab (R.P. Hadow), had pointed out that the project, when completed, would bring a return more than the mere interest charges on the investment. Practically the return was to be more than this because Hadow's inference was based on very moderate average rate of Rs. 4.5 per acre irrigation duty on the lands to be irrigated by Bhakra. Contrary to this, average water rate in the areas irrigated by Western Jumna Canal was Rs. 4.61 per acre.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, the agriculturists of South-East Punjab had offered to pay such high rates of *abiana* as also covered entire interest charges on the total investment on Bhakra. They calculated that net return to the Government on the investment on the Dam would be 8%. Government's benefits in the form of additional income from land revenue and savings in the recurring expenses on famines were besides.<sup>48</sup> Thirdly it was a habit with the government to dub every big project demanding a big investment as highly ambitious or uneconomical. For instance, to begin with, it had held that the Sutlej Valley Project was not a business proposition. But after its completion the results proved quite contrary. Punjab Government had made contribution of Rs. 902 lakhs towards the costs of the project and Rs. 60 lakhs towards the costs of the water courses connected therewith. While the latter amount was realised from the agriculturists, for the former, it was getting Rs. 57 lakhs as *abiana* charges. Thus it was getting a return of 6.25% return. Further in 1938-39, this

44. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxvi, 28/2/1935, p. 174; Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1936, pp. 696 and 701.

45. Shastri, R.S., *op.cit.*, p. 218; also *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxvii, p. 701.

46. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xxii, 25/11/1932, p. 707; also Vol. xv, 27/2/1930, pp. 185 and 242.

47. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 767.

48. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1936, p. 625; Vol. x, 15/3/1927, p. 455.

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example, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, Revenue member said in the Punjab Legislature on 28 February, 1929, that Chhotu Ram had been so persistently insisting on the implementation of the scheme that he went to the extent of annoying them (government).<sup>53</sup>

Some significant results of the efforts of the advocates of Bhakra during 1927-1936 were that for the survey of the Bhakra site and other areas to be commanded by it, Party No. 22 of the Survey of India was appointed in 1929 and it continued to work thereafter.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, out of the total cost estimates of Rs. 41.51 lakhs of the surveys and preparation of the project including Punjab States's share of Rs. 4 lakhs, Rs. 16.5 lakh had been spent by the provincial Government by the end of 1932.<sup>55</sup> However, thereafter, governments policy changed and can be best explained in the words of Nawab Muzzafar Khan, Revenue member. He said on 6th March, 1935, "Since the discussion with the Indian States in November 1932, it has been the policy of the government to restrict expenditure pending decision on certain points."<sup>56</sup>

Thirdly, government deputed a special officer in 1933 to look into the possibilities of an alternate scheme for providing irrigation to the British districts proposed to be covered by this project.<sup>57</sup> Fourthly, in 1936 the government agreed to the scheme of tubewell irrigation for Karnal district, as had been proposed by Chhotu Ram in 1935 as a stop gap arrangement till Bhakra was given a practical shape. Water thus spared from Western Jumna Canal could be used for irrigating the drier districts of Rohtak and Hissar.<sup>58</sup> Fifthly, government also assured, as stated by Sir Joginder Singh, Minister for Agriculture, on 19th March, 1936, to explore the possibilities of combining with it lift irrigation from the Western Jumna Canal by installing tubewells in the waterlogged area and thereby provide irrigation to the whole of South-East Punjab.<sup>59</sup> Lastly, the Revenue member, Muzaffar Khan, Chief Engineer and Senior Secretary to Financial Commissioner conferred with the Agent to the Governor-General Punjab States in around 1936 and succeeded in creating his interest in the scheme.<sup>60</sup>

However, from the above results certain facts are obvious. Firstly,

53. *P.L.C.D.*, Vol. xii, 18/2/1929, p. 559.

54. *Ibid.*, 27/2/1929, pp. 522-24; Vol. xxvi, 6/3/1935, p. 1350.

55. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxiii, 27/3/1933, p. 765.

56. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxvi 6/3/1935, p. 1350.

57. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxiii, 4/4/1933, pp. 974-75.

58. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxvi, 28/2/1935, p. 175; Vol. xxviii, 19/3/1936, p. 698.

59. *Ibid.*, Vol. xxviii, p. 698.

60. *Ibid.*

these gestures of the government, however, sympathetically proclaimed, did not materialise the Bhakra scheme. Secondly, in spite of the most apathetic attitude of the government, the advocates of the project did not let the project die out. Thirdly, these provided spade work for further zealous efforts by the advocates of the scheme under the new constitution which came into operation in 1937 and conceded Provincial autonomy abolishing the distinction between the Reserved and Transferred departments whereby irrigation and canals, finance and provincial public debt, ceased to be Reserved subjects.

By the close of 1936 conditions had become more favourable for the scheme because the differences among the Unionists had been patched up. That apart, the Unionist Party captured 101 seats out of 175 in elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly held in early 1937 and formed the government. Besides the Unionists, Bhakra scheme also fetched the support of many more like Pandit Shri Ram Sharma in the Punjab Legislature.<sup>61</sup> The period 1937-45 would have proved a landmark in the implementation of the Bhakra project, had the Second Great War not started in 1939 which hampered the import of the essential machinery as pointed out on 12 March, 1942, by the Revenue Minister, Sir Chhotu Ram.<sup>62</sup> Still the period remains an important phase in the genesis of the scheme.

Soon after the first session of the new Legislative Assembly, Minister for Development, Chaudhri Chhotu Ram called for the Bhakra file with a view to expediting its implementation.<sup>63</sup> As a result of the labourious efforts of the advocates of the scheme, especially the legislators from the South-East Punjab, a High Dam Circle, also known as Beas Dams Divison, was created in 1939 which prepared the designs and revised the estimates of the Bhakra Dam and carried out surveys for a dam on the Beas at Larji. By 1942, surveys connected with the Bhakra scheme had been completed and it was also revised to harness hydro-electric power from this dam.<sup>64</sup> By 1944, obstinacy of the ruler of Bilaspur was also overcome.<sup>65</sup> While by 1942 his attitude had come favourable, in 1944, he signed the agreement permitting the construction of the Bhakra Dam at its original site.<sup>66</sup>

61. *P.L.A.D.*, Vol. xix, 5/3/1942, p. 63.

62. *Ibid.* : p. 215.

63. *Ibid.* : Vol. I, 22/6/1937, p. 500.

64. J.G. (tr.), 26/3/1941, p. 3; also *P.L.A.D.*, Vol. xii, 5/3/1940, p. 132.

65. Raj. K. N., *op.cit.*, p. 48; also *P.L.A.D.*, Vol. xix, 5/3/1942, p. 63.

66. J.G. (tr.), 9/1/1946, p. 7; also Shastri, R. S., *op.cit.*, p. 218.

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Dispute with the government of Sind was also straightened out. The Governor-General, on the demand of the Sind Government that expected to get some compensation from the Punjab Government, appointed a Commission to settle the Indus water dispute. As expected, the Commission recommended that the Punjab Government should pay Rs. 2 crores to the Government of Sind to enable it to make the inundation canals workable after the Sutlej water had been impounded in the Bhakra Dam. The Punjab Government's first reaction was that it filed an appeal with the Privy Council against the award. But as the case prolonged, it paid the compensation to the Government of Sind.<sup>67</sup>

While the objections of the parties concerned were being sorted out, simultaneously power shortage was experienced in the province during the war period. In the untruncated Punjab, the only important source of electric power was Uhl River Hydro-Electric Scheme with an effective capacity of 36,000 K.W. It being a 'run-of-the river' scheme, was subject to serious shortages during winter months, especially in dry years, when river flow dropped as low as 100 cusecs necessitating severe power-cuts. Irrigation needs also increased with the continually rising demand for food production. So, the need for giving a practical shape to this ambitious project became urgent. The whole scheme was reviewed in the light of the up-to-date needs for irrigation and power and preliminary work was commenced in 1945. But the progress was again withheld by the unfortunate turbulent conditions of 1947. After partition, demand for power rose sharply because new townships and industrial estates were envisaged to settle the displaced population from the West Pakistan (now Pakistan), and secondly independence of the country had brought a change in the outlook of the people. Thus in 1948 regular work started for the construction of the Bhakra Dam at its original site.<sup>68</sup>

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67. *P.L.A.D.*, Vol. xxi, 16/3/1943, p. 35; also Shastri, R.S., *op.cit.*, p. 218.

68. *Sauventr Bhakra-Nangal Power Houses*, *op cit.*, pp. 9, 20-21, 79.



## Self-Determination for India\*

The war is ended and peace is restored. The ravages of war will be repaired by the industries of peace. The world is familiar with this painful process of destruction and reconstruction by war-makers and peace-makers. But the present desolation and slaughter have so staggered mankind that the human heart craves for the blessings of peace for all time to come. The Congress of Peace will have not only to deal with the question of retribution, restoration, indemnities and repair of ravages, but also to satisfy the craving of mankind for durable peace on earth by extending the rule of right against might throughout the globe. No higher or holier work was ever entrusted to the Congress of Peace. It is a task which demands self-sacrifice as anticipated by President Wilson : "All who sit at the Peace Conference," says he, "must be ready to pay the price, and the price is impartial justice, no matter whose interest is crossed." To realise this noble object it would have been better if all countries, including India, Ireland and Egypt, were represented not by official nominees, but by men who command the confidence of their compatriots. The exclusion of India is the exclusion of one-fifth of the human race vitally affected by the discussions and decisions of the Congress. We apprehend, that in the absence of such adequate representation, and on account of the multiplicity and complexity of the questions arising for solution, it is possible that the gravity of the Indian problem may be overlooked or underestimated. We, therefore, venture to expound the case of India with the view of placing it before the British Statesmen and the British public, and through them before the Peace Congress, in the hope that it will contribute in some measure to the right solution of the world-wide problems of Peace, Freedom, and Democracy.

### Causes of War

We welcome the formation of a League of Nations as a permanent political organisation for maintaining the peace of the world, and fostering the development of different nationalities on the principle of Self-Determination; but we believe that no League will ever accomplish these noble objects without first removing the root causes of war amongst nations. A glance at the political history of Europe will reveal that wars

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\* The Indian Home Rule League Office, Adelphi, London.

## SELF DETERMINATION FOR INDIA

have been occasioned by certain ideals, charged with tremendous energy as motive forces which cannot be ignored without disaster to the future peace of the world. These dynamic forces are : (1) Imperialism—i.e., the desire to form empires by conquest of other countries; (2) Nationalism—i.e., the aspiration of a people to overthrow foreign domination and unite into one and the same State; (3) Democracy—i.e., the people's aspirations to replace governments by Autocracy or Bureaucracy by governments of the people, by the people, and for the people; and lastly (4) Trade rivalries or political jealousies amongst the premier Nations of Europe to keep other parts of the world in subjection under the guise of being trustees, custodians of order, or mandatories of civilisation. We believe every one of these causes plays an important part in the relations of one nation with another. The League will have to eliminate every one of these causes of war if it is to accomplish the greatest and most durable of its work—viz., the Peace of the world. The relation of one nation with another must first be settled on the principle of justice, giving effect to ideals which promote peace and repressing forces which make for war. Without doing so the League of Nations will ultimately degenerate into an instrument of oppression, especially to those nations who are not free at present. We believe the principle of Self-Determination alone can solve the great problem of peace, and we claim the application of this principle to the case of India, which has contributed so much in men, money and materials to the triumph of the Allied Arms. We do not advocate dismemberment or severance. We desire partnership on the footing of equality of status with the Oversea-Dominions. Under the British aegis, we demand "an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" for India similar to that accorded to the various nationalities within the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires under President Wilson's "fourteen points" assented to by the British Government with the approval of the people. Our claim is founded upon the ideals and rights of Self-Determination, Nationalism, Freedom of Nations, National dignity and self-respect. These immortal principles have infused a new life into India during the war, and the supreme objective of this war, the peace of the world, cannot be achieved unless full scope be given to the principles of Self-Determination for gratifying the internal aspirations of India, and ending the external ambitions of foreign nations in relation to India. Without it, the world can never be made safe for Democracy.

### **Monroe Doctrine for India**

There is no doubt that India has long been the centre of gravity of

the premier powers of Europe. They have cast furtive glances at the brightest gem in the Crown of England. They have envied the fair fields and pastures vast for British employment, enterprise and exploitation. But before this war not even England really knew the boundless potentialities of India as the emporium of raw material for the industries of Europe. Unfortunately, under the conditions created by the war this new factor will generate new forces threatening to disturb the stability of peace so long as India is governed autocratically from Whitehall as a mere Dependency. The British Empire in the East was built by British merchants, and British merchants are not philanthropists. Although Indian administration is divorced from Indian trade, British policy is more or less dominated by commercial influences and proprietary principles. "At bottom", says Seeley, "it implies the idea of an estate" (*Expansion of England*). This is the habit contracted on the American Plantation during 150 years of British exploitation. "It was only by slow degrees, however, that England learned the right policy towards her colonies. She began, as Rome did, by regarding her possessions as estates to be farmed for her own selfish benefit. Nothing less than the loss of America sufficed to teach her how short-sighted her policy was" (Woodrow Wilson : *The State*). But the idea still survives in the Indian policy even according to Seeley. It is certainly unworthy of a great people. But apart from its unworthiness, the economic supremacy, which the Indian resources secure for England, will unquestionably intensify the worst passions and jealousies already excited against her by her maritime supremacy and imperial control of half the globe. Rivalry leads to militarism, despotism, and wars of conquest. The economic attractions will, therefore, aggravate the temptation of India for conquering heroes and States. Her former fame as the mart and mint of the world allured invaders by land from the days of Alexander the Great. But the land invasion ended with the Mohammedan occupation. The capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in blockading the land way of Europe to India stimulated the mariners of Spain and Portugal to find a waterway. In the process Columbus discovered America and Vasco De Gama went to India. Then America and India both became the battle-fields of European nations. "The Mahratta (? Indian) hordes were slaughtered on the rice-fields of India to decide the struggle which ended only on the plains of Abraham" between France and England. America has fortunately ceased to be the direful curse of European quarrels. The attitude of the United States with its 'Monroe Doctrine' saved the Southern American Republics for self-development. The American Union with laudable self-abne-

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gation refrained from coercing them into the Union. But India has not fared so well. England, no doubt, drove the Dutch and the French from India and consolidated her power. But Russia and Germany in turn planned the conquest of India. Few will have the temerity to deny that the present war was partly caused by German designs on her. According to the *Times* of January 23rd, 1918, the ex-Kaiser is reported to have said "We shall not merely occupy India, but shall conquer it; and the vast revenues that the British allow to be taken by the Indian Princes will, after our conquest, flow in a golden stream into the Fatherland." The loyalty of India, and particularly of the intelligentsia of India, frustrated the German attempts to foment conspiracies. But clearly these external ambitions and internal aspirations render it absolutely imperative to settle Indian problems by enunciating a 'Monroe Doctrine' for Asia and Africa, and emancipating India from pupillage and democratising the Government of India so as to remove rivalries and assure the world that India is governed by the sons of India, for the benefit of India and the common welfare of all mankind.

### **British Policy**

Regarding the internal questions, the latest policy towards India was announced in the House of Commons on August 20th, 1917, in answer to an interpellation in these terms:-

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible."

This policy was qualified by the Secretary of State for India in his said answer as follows :-

"I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be the judges of the times and measure of each advance."

The policy, as qualified by the Secretary of State for India, evidently denies the application of Self-Determination to India. The denial is founded upon the assumption - first, that India is not a nation, and, therefore, unfit for Self-Determination; and secondly, that she requires a prolonged period of Trusteeship with the view of gradually training her for the ulti-

mate goal of Self-Government. This policy was, however, announced by government without any mandate from the people and before the principle of Self-Determination was enunciated by President Wilson, or accepted by the British Government. But after this declaration and acceptance, its maintenance would be inconsistent with high-minded statesmanship and political wisdom, and is calculated to create great discontentment, especially as the underlying assumptions are untenable and unjust. We, therefore, propose to examine these assumptions in this brochure.

### **India, A Nation**

It is argued that India is not a nation, but congeries of nations, not a country but a continent. These epigrams obscure the truth and delude the ignorant. What do we mean by a nation? Do the English, the French, the Poles severally constitute a nation? Then the Bengalis, the Punjabis, the Rajputs and the Mahrattas do also form a nation. The Bengalis inhabit the same region with a distinct name. Ethnologically they are descended from the same race. They have the same blood, the same language, the same civilisation, literature, customs, and traditions. These are the essential elements that constitute nationality in the popular sense. Castes do not divide a nation any more than classes do in England. Creeds do not rend a nation in two. If it did religious toleration would be impossible. There is less antagonism between the creeds of India than there is between the various sects of Christianity in England. There are hundreds of such sects in England, but there are five religions in the whole of India. Two of these cover 95 per cent. of the population. The statement about the Bengali group is equally true of all the other groups in India. There are about 12 such groups. Historically up to the advent of British rule each of them formed a distinct State, more or less exclusively governed by themselves. These distinct States were in some measure disturbed by the artificial arrangement of the Provinces by the British Government. Nevertheless the spirit of nationalism pervades every one of them, and manifests itself when violently attacked or assailed, as it did when Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal. Historically, each of these groups form a nation in the same sense as the English, the French, the Belgians and the Poles do. They are, therefore, entitled to Self-Determination, and upon that principle also to federate to form the United States of India.

We have so far confined ourselves to the definition of nation in the popular sense of the word in dealing with the afore-said groups. But as a matter of fact, in the broad sense of the word, the whole of India is one nation. India is said to be an epitome of the world; but there is unity in diversity. "India, encircled by seas and mountains, is indisputably a geo-

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graphical unit." (V.A. Smith, *Early History of India*.) "There is no part of the world better marked out by nature as a region by itself than India exclusive of Burmah" (Chisholm : *Geography*). Ethnologically they belong to same Aryan race, except in some parts of India, but even there they have been assimilated. The whole of India was Hinduised long before Alexander invaded India in 315 B. C. The Hindoo religion absorbed dominant culture of India. This culture was based upon the ancient traditions, impulses and sentiments preserved and sung in the great Epic of India, the *Mahabharata*, which is translated in most of the modern vernaculars. Sanskrit was once the *lingua franca* of India. It was the language of the learned, as Latin was in Europe in the Middle Ages. "India, though it has more than 500 dialects, has only one sacred language, only one sacred literature, accepted and revered by all adherents of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank and creed. That language and literature is Sanskrit, the most ancient language in the world" (Monier Williams). Three-fourths of the population speak dialects derived from Sanskrit, as French, Spanish and Portuguese are derived from Latin. Though there are many dialects, there are only about twelve which cover the whole of India. Politically, the whole of India is now practically united, and had been so also in the past, notably in the days of Asoka. But the ancient Emperors of India, more liberal than the modern Tsars or Kaisers, never used force to standardise language, culture, creed or caste but left each group to self-development suitable to its environments. India, therefore, possesses all the elements of nationality—viz., same blood, same culture, same traditions, and same faith. This Hindoo nationality was to a certain extent disturbed by the Mohammedan invasion and Moghul rule, but the overwhelming majority of Moslems are the descendants of Hindoos who embraced Mohammedanism, and as such they have retained the language and customs of their respective regions, and are still influenced by the immemorial Hindoo culture except in religious matter. "Century after century our departed ancestors have fashioned our ideas and sentiments" (Le Bon). The change of faith cannot obliterate the work of centuries. "Beneath the manifold diversities of physical and social type, language, and customs and religion, which strike the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin" (Sir Herbert Risley). The civilisation of India "has many features which differentiate from that of all other regions of the world, while they are common to the whole country in a degree sufficient to justify its treatment as a unit in the history of human social and intellectual development" (V.A. Smith, *Early History*

of India). So intense is the feeling of unity throughout India that any attempt to divide the country into independent States would provoke indignant remonstrances. In fact, so deep is this feeling that even a proposal to create racial Provinces is regarded by some Indians as a malicious manoeuvre at disruption. The allegation that India is not a nation is, therefore, untenable and unjustifiable. In political science, "A nation is no longer what it had been in the ancient world, a progeny of common ancestors, or the aboriginal product of a particular religion, a result of merely physical and material causes, but a moral and political being; not the creation of geographical or physiological unity, but developed in the course of history by the action of the State. It is derived from the State and not supreme over it. A State may, in the course of time, produce a nationality, but that a nationality should constitute a State is contrary to the nature of modern civilisation" (Lord Acton). Such a nationality is constituted when the people are animated by sympathies which make them co-operate with one another more willingly than with other people and desire to be under the same Government. Such a desire for co-operation exists throughout India and has been accelerated and accentuated by British domination. Indeed, according to Sir Henry Maine, "the idea of Nationality was first derived from India, and it travelled westwards." It is this feeling that makes federal union feasible. In this respect the Bengalis, the Mahrattas, the Madrasees, the Sikhs and other groups in India are more anxious to federate than the nations under the Dual Monarchy, or the defunct Russian Empire, or even the Irish and the English, or any other European nations. The Concordat between the Hindoos and Moham-medans at Lucknow in 1916 illustrates the facility with which the Indians left to themselves settle differences. But to require races of India to coalesce into a nation with *one* religion and *one* tongue, is midsummer-madness. It would revive the mediaeval idea of one Empire, one people and one church, which engendered despotisms of the blackest dye. The world is now happily rid of such tyranny. America has presented to the world the principle of federalism, the last of the political principles, but the richest in promise of peace and freedom. According to Lord Acton, it renders possible and practicable "the highest degree of organisation, which Government is capable of receiving, with the fullest security for the preservation of local customs and ancient rights, where liberty would achieve its most glorious result, while centralisation and absolutism would be destruction." There is no justification whatever for the assumption that India is not capable of such organisation. On the contrary, the conditions and capacity, postulated by Lord Acton, exist in a remarkable degree in India.

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If such federal organisation has not hitherto been evolved in India it must be attributed to the neglect and the freezing and sterilising influences of the Indian Bureaucracy with its excessive centralisation resulting from its rigid methods and notions of trusteeship.

### **Political Trusteeship**

Theory of trusteeship predicates that the trustee himself is fit. But can the west be a fit trustee for the East ? Can materialism be a fit trustee for spiritualism ? The two civilisations are so distinct and different that an English poet exclaimed "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." "Indian civilisation lives apart. As well try to graft an Oak and Banyan as attempt to develop it on English lines. In the phrase of the day India must have the right of Self-Determination" (Bernard Houghton in the *Positivist*, December 1918). It is manifest that England cannot be a fit trustee for India, for a trustee, unlike an executor, enforces his own will as to what is good for the ward. The result is deplorable. India lags far behind Germany or Japan. In 150 years of British rule the progress in India is less than the progress in Germany or Japan in 50 years. Indians have as much intelligence and capacity as the Germans or the Japanese. The rapid strides of Germany in commerce and industry have made her one of the greatest workshops in the world. India, with her unrivalled resources is still in industrial swaddling clothes. A century ago the percentage of literates in India was about the same as in England. To-day 95 per cent. can read and write in England, while in India scarcely 6 per cent. can do so. It is unnecessary for us to specify other grave defects. As a tree cannot grow in the shade so a nation cannot really prosper under an overshadowing trusteeship or overlordship. But the Bureaucracy still stubbornly cling to their "ideal of trusteeship."

Englishmen do not realise the deep wound inflicted on Indian sensitiveness by insisting on such trusteeship. Trustees are appointed for minors. India is not an infant nation, not a primitive people, but the eldest brother in the family of man, noted for her philosophy and for being the home of religions that console half of mankind. Trustees are in civil law appointed during the period of minority, so that trusteeship comes to an end by the efflux of time. Having regard to the frailty of man one shudders to think what would be the state of the society if self made trusteeships could come to an end only when the trustees thought their wards capable. No trustee would renounce his trust voluntarily under such circumstances unless the trust estate proved to be a sort of a *demnosa hereditas*. Political trustees in the same way would find countless excuses to prolong their trusteeship till the crack of doom. Trusteeship is opposed to Self-Determi-



nation, Liberty and Democracy. It is much better that people should govern themselves even if they blunder in the process. Left to themselves, Indian will solve their problems as effectively as Japan has done in the short time of 40 years. No alien, even supposing that he is perfectly selfless, can do it in hundreds of years, for he is incapable of really understanding the needs and aspirations of the people. No foreign governor can train the governed for self-government. Even the apologists of Bureaucracy admit that it has failed to prepare Indians for self-government, and profess to believe that they are now about to make an earnest beginning in training them for responsible government. But a foreign agency is not the proper method. Indigenous agency is the right-way. "To hold in political bondage a nation possessing so ancient, complex and deep-rooted civilisation, to fetter it from free development on its own lines and free solution of its own problems, is not merely a political blunder of the first magnitude, but a treason against humanity" (Bernard Houghton in the *Positivist*, December 1918). Under these circumstances the least that the Congress can do is to fix a time limit for the termination of the self-imposed trusteeship, as America did in the Philippines. Without such a time limit British trusteeship is only another name for *patria potestas*, from which Rome escaped after long travail by the efforts of liberal jurists. India has determined at the Sessions of the Indian National Congress, and at the meeting of the All-India Moslem League held in August 1918, for the special purpose of considering the official proposals of reform contained in the Montague-Chelmsford report, that this period shall not exceed fifteen years under any circumstances whatever.

The period of fifteen years naturally implies some beginning. The Government of India is an exceedingly centralised autocracy. "The Viceroy of India and the Czar of Russia are sometimes said to be the two great autocrats of the modern world" (Prof. Lowell, *Government of England*). India has determined that the first instalment of reform in the Indian constitution shall be made the Congress League Scheme. The British Government proposes to maintain intact autocracy in the Government of India, and to convert only the subordinate Provincial Governments into a diarchy, placing the people on the lowest rung of the administrative ladder, and contemplating progress *step by step* towards the goal of self-government by periodic official inquisitions into the capacity of the people every ten years. This is no place to discuss the details, but we resent the implied slur on the patriotism, intelligence and capacity of the people of India. The people of India are admittedly as shrewd, law-abiding and intelligent as the people of Europe. The venerable civilisation of India has moulded

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their character and made them fit for citizenship in any civilised State. The only argument against their capacity is that a large majority of them cannot read and write. But this is no fault of theirs. It is a grievance against Bureaucracy. It was their duty to teach them to read and write during the past 150 years of their rule. All other countries have done so during this period including, Great Britain and Japan. India is left behind. As a matter of fact the bureaucracy recently opposed even the partial application of the compulsory principle in primary education advocated by Indians in a private Bill. Under these circumstances, to urge illitracy as an excuse for withholding political rights is to add insult to injury. But apart from this insult, the scheme does not realise that the first requisite of progress is liberty for self-development. We may have progress step by step, but we cannot have liberty step by step. The slave cannot be emancipated step by step. The chains of slavery cannot be struck off link by link. We cannot have liberty link by link. Liberty must be given at once and at one stroke, and then progress will follow. It is true that this progress must be by stages covering the intervening space. But in these days of Escalators, Lifts, and Aeroplanes the step must not be a 'ten years' step. We are told that the British took six hundred years to reach the present form of government. But Athens did it in a generation and France in six months. Lord Acton says "During six months, from January 1789 to the fall of the Bastille in July, France travelled as far as England in the 600 years between the Earl of Leicester and Lord Beaconsfield. Once the ground is explored and rails laid down the wanderer can travel with the speed of the Flying Dutchman. Many centuries elapsed before Newton discovered the law of gravity. Every Schoolboy now learns it without much difficulty. As in Physics so in Politics. When a Positive State "is once definitely established in any single centre, its extension to the race requires in no case a repetition of the phases proper to the primary movement" (Auguste Comte, *Positive Polity*). Left to themselves there can, therefore, be no doubt that Indians are quite capable of solving their Domestic Problems on democratic principles. The truth is that Democracy is older than Autocracy in India. Our ancestors were fully accustomed to democratic institutions. The great Epic of India not only mentions, but describes Indian democracies, and the Buddhist literature fully testifies to their existence in those early days. The Greeks found village republics in full force. For over 2,000 years, village republics flourished in India from Megasthenes to Munro, till exterminated by Anglo-India centralisation. The vigorous Caste Panchayat of to-day contains the germs of republicanism. No people in the world have had a wider or longer

experience in working popular institution. It is, therefore, absurd to presume that Indians are incapable of working democratic institutions. Absolute freedom for autonomous development would enable India to advance as Japan did, by leaps and bounds, thereby becoming a source of strength to Great Britain and a valued contributor to the civilisation of mankind. India is anxious to restore her pristine glory. Of this there is no doubt. Liberty will infuse a new soul into her. It is, therefore, hoped that the high-minded statesmanship of England will rise to the occasion and support this demand of India at the Congress of Peace and give her the longed-for opportunity of working, on her own lines, democratic institutions and thereby becoming a source of strength to the British Commonwealth.

### **Conclusion**

Upon the principles we have discussed we claim that the British Parliament should enact a complete Constitution for India conceding autonomy within the British Commonwealth, with transitory provisions for bringing the whole constitution into full operation within the time specified by the Congress and the Moslem League. The autonomy we advocate may be briefly sketched as follows :—The Peninsula of India should be divided into a number of provinces on the principle of nationality. The Province should administer the internal affairs of the Province and be entrusted with all powers requisite for the administration. The form of Government should be democratic. These Provinces should be federated to form the United States of India, with democratic Central Executive and Legislative bodies having Power to deal with the Internal affairs of the whole of India. The United States of India should form a unit of the British Commonwealth with equal status with any other constituent unit thereof. There should be a supreme commonwealth Executive and Legislature dealing with concerns common to the whole commonwealth, such as war, peace, army, navy, and foreign affairs. In this pyramid every part of the British Empire would be united with full freedom for self-development of the constituent parts. Such a system has received the benediction of Lord Acton, who says "Where different races inhabit the territories of one Empire composed of several smaller States, it is, of all possible combinations, the most favourable to the establishment of a highly-developed saystem of freedom. ...These are conditions necessary for the very highest degree of organisation which government is capable of receiving. In such a country as this liberty would achieve its most glorious results, while centralisation and absolutism would be destruction." Such a system embodies a higher and a nobler ideal—viz., the ideal of a world-wide "Empire of amity and not an Empire of enmity" (Herbert

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Spencer). The problem of Ulster has brought the federal principle to the forefront in British politics. The refashioning of the British commonwealth cannot be achieved by patchwork. It demands drastic changes on federal lines. We believe the autonomy we advocate would place the British Commonwealth on the firmer foundation of the affection of peoples, destroying jealousies and promoting the happiness and welfare not only of India, but of all mankind. In this hope we appeal to all for sympathy and adequate measures.

## The Sikhs and the Chinese Aggression\*

I rise to support the resolution moved by the leader of the House on the Chinese aggression, subject to the amendment moved by Prof. Ranga with others.

I am persuaded that a proper discussion on the subject cannot be had unless there is made particular mention of the Sikh people in relation to the present crisis. In doing so, therefore, I am convinced that thereby the interests of the nation are served, in so far as it may result in clarification of issues, requisite reassurances, and a new understanding without which new critical situations, such as the present one, can never be adequately faced.

The Sikhs as a people have special reasons to be shocked and angered at the wanton aggression against our Himalayan frontiers by the People's Government of China. Although Ladakh was a part of the great Mughal Empire of India in the 17th century, it were the Sikhs who finally and firmly made it an integral part of the then Punjab Empire during the middle of the 19th century. In 1834, during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself, Ladakh was taken by the Sikh troops under the command of Col. Zorawar Singh Dogra. In April 1841, two years after the death of Ranjit Singh, Prince Nau Nihal Singh, the Viceregent of the Sikh Government, ordered Zorawar Singh, made a General by now, to demand Garo's adhesion to the Punjab on the ground that it was a dependency of Iskardu, and Iskardu was now a province of the Punjab. It was Prince Nau Nihal Singh who then formally demanded, that in view of the changed circumstances Lhasa should pay tribute to Lahore and not to Peking, and that Tibet should accept suzerainty of the Punjab which was, at that time, the only part of India enjoying sovereign political power. Thus in substance, the demand of the Sikhs was for acquiring suzerainty of India over Tibet. To achieve these aims it was what in June 1841, the Punjabis captured the town of Garo, and on 29th August, 1841, the flag of the Sikh Darbar was hoisted at Tuklakot. In this manner the Punjabis, like the Indus itself, pierced the heart of Tibet to its very

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\* Speech delivered by Sardar Kapur Singh, M.A. (Cantab), Member of Parliament, on the 12th November, 1961, on the Resolution of the Prime Minister of India, on Chinese crisis.

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core. Then followed certain reverses occasioned more by the non-aligned cold weather than the human adversaries in battle field. In the Spring of 1842, Gulab Singh, who was no more than a Sikh feudatory chief at the time and who had yet to render special services to the British to become a Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, after destruction of the independence of the Punjab, was commanded to rush reinforcements to Leh, where they encircled the Chinese force sent from Lhasa, flooded the enemy out of their entrenchments and decimated them after taking the Chinese General as a prisoner. On 17th October, 1842, envoys of the Sikh Durbar including the personal representative of Gulab Singh, signed a treaty with the representatives of the Chinese Emperor, and the Dalai Lama of Lhasa. The parties to this treaty are the 'Khalsajio,' i.e., the Sikh people, and the Chinese Emperor and the Buddhist pontiff of Tibet. Gulab Singh does not come in these except through a later interpolation. It was agreed by this treaty that the boundaries of Ladakh and Lhasa would remain as traditionally recognised and considered inviolable by either party, and that the trade, particularly, of tea and *pashmina* wool, would, as in the past, pass through Ladakh.

I have digressed into these historical details for two reasons. Firstly, during recent years it has become customary to present this chapter of Indian history in a slightly different manner so as to create and sustain the legend that the Ladakh region of India is a gift from Dogra ruler, Maharaja Gulab Singh of Kashmir. On page 52 of the Govt. of India Report of the officials on the Boundary Question, published by the Ministry of External Affairs in 1961, this legend is supported, and a sensitive section of the Sikh people perceived in it a link in the plan to demonetise the Sikhs as the builders of Indian History with the ultimate object of pushing them out of the main stream of History, as a people. Secondly, it explains why the present aggression of the Chinese into these areas has touched the Sikhs more intimately and has aroused their anger specially on the ground that the Chinese People's Government now aim at destroying the work which the Sikhs had accomplished for consolidation of the natural and true frontiers of India.

The Sikhs, therefore, justly feel that it is their special responsibility to defend the country and to make all possible sacrifices during the crisis which has been forced upon the nation by our unscrupulous neighbour. The Sikh people react to historical developments somewhat differently from their neighbours, for the reason that the peculiar view of Reality, that they hold accords a substantial status to spatio-temporal events and for the reason that their peculiar ethos demands a sensitive awareness of

the historical process. The present occasion reminds the Sikhs of an almost identical crisis that arose almost a century ago, when the British East India Company's forces, unscrupulously and crudely aggressed into the frontiers of the Sikh Empire of Punjab in the winter of the year 1845. This East India Company Bahadur was, at that time, bound by Panchashila treaty relations with the Sikhs. A Muslim poet, Shah Mohammad has immortalised in poignant verse the substance of the Sikh Army Headquarters' Mobilisation Orders which were then issued :—

*Hoya Kooch da hukam sab Regmintan noon,  
Ghor charhe bhi na pichay rakhne jee,  
Muslaman deean Paltnān rehin aithay,  
Boohay shahir de hon na sakhne jee,  
Gorkhaleeay Dogray jun Pacham,  
Uttay des de rahib sarukhnay jee,  
Kalghi walay de Khalsay hon moohrāy, -  
Agay hor garib na dhaknay jee.*

These orders proceeded to declare "a total mobilisation of the standing forces of the army, including the cavalry," and they directed that "the good and faithful Muslim regiments of the Khalsa army were to assume the delicate task of protecting the heart of the Empire, the Capital, while the Hindu regiments consisting of Dogras and Gurkhas must be deployed on the North-Western frontiers." The Order specifically directed that "so far as the active battle front on the Sutluj banks was concerned, the enemy fire must be faced primarily by the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh whose privilege and duty it was to die for protecting the honour and integrity of the country."

The Sikhs, at this juncture of the history of our country, now demand that their inalienable right and privilege of dying for their country before others should be conceded to them

Such is the answer which the Sikh people would like to make to those who have suspected them of harbouring separatist tendencies, of confusing politics with religion, and of thwarting national integration, during the past fifteen years. By willingly and enthusiastically undergoing through this ordeal of fire, the Sikhs hope to convince every one that the only separation that they long for is the right to maintain and grow their group-individuality, that the only sovereign state that they want to acclaim and preserve as their own is the one which extends from the outskirts of Holy Amritsar to Kanayakumari, that they subordinate politics to religion for the fundamental reason that nationalism though it may enable the patriot to meet death, it can do nothing to explain it, that the only integration

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that is acceptable to them is the one which concedes existence of diversity as the only sure basis of unity.

With these words I support the amendment moved by prof. Ranga to the effect that the resolution moved by the leader of the House would remain unrealistic and somewhat incomplete unless this House also resolves its awareness of and its sense of regret at the state of unpreparedness in which we are shown to have been found by the Chinese invasion on the frontiers. This resolution will further remain incomplete, unless we specifically record our unreserved acknowledgement of the graceful and true friendliness with which the governments of the great peoples of the U.S.A., the United Kingdom and Canada in particular, have offered to extend help to us. Likewise we must be grateful to the other forty or more countries of the world who have sympathised with us.



## Book Reviews

*The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, by W. H. McLeod, (Oxford University Press, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1975), pp. VIII+118, price Rs. 35.

Dr McLeod is deeply involved in Sikh studies. He has already to his credit a number of works on the Sikh community and their religion, first and best-known of which is his book on Guru Nanak. The book under review is his latest in the field.

This book is a collection of five essays out of which four represent revised versions of the author's lectures delivered at the University of Cambridge during 1970 under the auspices of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. One of the essays is based on his paper read at the 1969 session of the Punjab History Conference. The subjects covered in the different essays appear to be disparate but essentially they are all marked by enquiries into the broad dynamics of evolution of the Sikh community. The title of the book is thus not inappropriate, though it looks rather strange that the author should have chosen to use the term community for the title because it does not fully accord with the restricted connotation in which he has employed the term inside throughout this work.

Dr McLeod is not satisfied with the traditional theories of Sikh history and has attempted a fresh and, I must say, very bold interpretation. His basic disagreement with the traditional interpretation concerns "its simplicity." He says : "It starts too late and ends too soon. It omits vital elements within the limited area which it covers. It oversimplifies the events..." However, he does accept the traditionally recognised three main stages of development through which Sikh community in its growth has had to pass : (i) the phase which started with Guru Nanak and ended with Guru Arjan, (ii) the phase starting with Guru Hargobind and ending with the creation of *Khalsa*, (iii) the phase from the creation of *Khalsa* onwards. The novelty of Dr McLeod's approach lies chiefly in his effort to interpret the evolution of the community entirely on the basis of contemporary events and Jat cultural patterns. The thought-pattern or ideology of Guru Nanak which lay at the very foundation of the Sikh movement is given no place of importance in shaping the growth of the community. The great emphasis he has laid on the historical role of social and political factors in Sikh history is to be welcomed but by overlooking the vital

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factor of ideology, he has, as a matter of fact, missed the essential elan of the movement. Would the Jat culture and contemporary events alone, howsoever important, have led to either the formation or development of the community as such, if there were no guiding ideas and ideals working behind those forces, one may ask ?

The first essay deals with the evolution of the Sikh community. The title is somewhat misleading insofar as it gives, of course wrongly, the impression that out of all the essays this alone is concerned with the subject indicated in the title of the book itself. Examining the origin and growth of the Sikh society, the author has made a number of statements which, if true, would give a new dimension to our knowledge of the subject. For instance, it is in the organisational and not religious sense that Guru Nanak is regarded as the founder of Sikhism. In religious thought, the Guru merely reworked the Sant synthesis of Nath and Vaishnav traditions of India, a phenomenon that, according to Dr McLeod, had been worked out prior to him by men like Bhagat Kabir. Now, one would agree with him if by this he means that the roots of some of the Guru's ideas are traceable in the past Indian religious tradition but it is going too far to say that the Guru only followed the Sant synthesis. There is plenty of evidence to prove that neither the Naths nor the Vaishnav Bhagats had a positive attitude towards society and the Guru disapproved both of them. The former lived far away from the people while the latter though living among the people interested themselves only in devotional worship. Even what Dr McLeod calls the Sant synthesis suffered from a serious lack of social concern. Insofar as Guru Nanak accepted social concern as central to his religious belief, he broke an independent and new ground and from that point of view he may be regarded as the founder of Sikhism in the full sense of the term. Here it is also important to mention that Dr McLeod's view that Guru Nanak had only religious and no social concern is difficult to accept in its entirety.

The author's view that Guru Amar Das took several effective measures to develop the distinctive personality of his Sikh following will not be contested but his statement that by building the *Baoli* at Goindwal, he deviated from the teaching of Guru Nanak is unacceptable. Guru Nanak had denounced *tirathism* but not *tirath* as such. His doctrine of interiority, which Dr McLeod had particularly stressed, was certainly opposed to any religious practice underlining formalism and thereby becoming an end by itself but it did not deny the utility of such of those practices as did not come in the way of spiritual development. To any system of religious belief, establishment of necessary institutions is essential

and must come sooner or later. Guru Nanak himself founded the institution of *Sangat*, *Pangat*, *Dharamsal*. This process was accelerated under his successors in response to the requirements of the growing Sikh society.

Dr McLeod has attributed the transformation of the peaceful Sikh religious movement into a militant one in the time of Guru Hargobind to the impact of Jat Culture. This is again open to question. First, Jats were not the only people in the Punjab to have a martial tradition. The Khatri, Rajputs and low-status people living in the rural areas in medieval times equally had martial traditions and moved about fully armed. Even Banjaras, whose occupation was to carry provisions for state armies, were well equipped with arms for self defence. Secondly, it is unbelievable that the martial Jats forced Guru Hargobind to adopt the path of militancy in his relations with the rulers. Thirdly, there is a strong Sikh tradition that it was the Guru's own decision which was taken at the very outset of his pontificate when he put on the two swords of *Miri* and *Piri*. It is even said that an instruction to that effect had been received by him from his father Guru Arjan a little before his death. Fourthly, militancy was in fact not a deviation from Guru Nanak's system of thought. The founder Guru's social vision, like his metaphysical vision, was comprehensive in nature taking within its range the totality of society. All social problems, whatever their nature, came within the purview of his social philosophy. His compositions bear eloquent testimony to his views about social discrimination, economic exploitation, miscarriage of justice, tyranny of rulers, cruelties of invaders, cowardice of common people and many other evil practices current in the then society. So the seeds of a militant response to challenges were inherent in the system of Guru Nanak and when his successors chose to take the bull by the horns rather than to succumb to it, they were acting in full accord with their inherited Sikh ideology. However, it may be said that the Jats did make a great contribution in the evolution of the Sikh community. Once the decision was taken to meet force with force, the Gurus made fullest use of their physical prowess and valour.

Dr McLeod, further on, tries to show that the institutions of corporate and scriptural Gurus were not established by any pronouncement of the Tenth Guru. They were both subsequent developments which appeared gradually in response to contemporary circumstances and cultural patterns of the Jats. He is of the opinion that Guru Gobind Singh did not abolish the personal line of Gurus. Rather, it ended because the Guru passed away without leaving any heir. In the situation which developed later in the 18th century, the concept of the corporate Guru took shape but with a

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material change in the circumstances around the close of this century, this concept yielded place of primacy to the scriptural Guru. This second concept has held the ground up to now. This position of the author is contrary to historical facts. It is recorded in *Gur-Sobha*, a contemporary work from the pen of Senapat, a courtier poet of the Tenth Guru, that before the last Guru breathed his last at Nanded, he conferred *guruship* on the *Khalsa*. As regards the scriptural Guru, though no definite evidence has so far been found, it is strongly believed that this too is based on a pronouncement of Guru Gobind Singh. Giani Garja Singh who has worked on Bhat records, claim to have seen a *Bhat Vahi* entry containing a reference to this. Also, Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* composed about the middle of the 18th century contains a clear-cut reference to this. The conflict in the time of Banda Singh further clarifies the position. The opponents of Banda Singh addressed themselves as *Tatt Khalsa* and refused to accept the personal leadership of Banda Singh claiming that Guru Gobind Singh had conferred authority on the Khalsa. Hence, it is difficult to accept Dr McLeod's idea that the development of the idea of corporate Guru was a subsequent product of the cultural patterns of Jats. All the same, the 18th century in Sikh history was a momentous period when under the pressure of circumstances and also due to the pragmatic outlook of the Jat Sikhs, the corporate Guru concept took a practical shape and functioned through the institutions of *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmatta*.

In essay 3, *Cohesive Ideals and Institutions in the History of the Sikh Panth*, the author has identified several important bonds of cohesion which over the centuries have not only held the Sikhs together but have also imparted to them unity and strength. In the pre-Khalsa period the more important of these factors were the personality of the first Guru, Baba Nanak, *Janamsakhis*, *manjis* and *masands*, while in the post-Khalsa period the cohesive role was performed by the concept of *Guru Panth* and *Guru Granth Sahib*, the code of discipline (*rahit*), Sikh soldiers in the army, and the institution of *Gurdwara*. So far as the identification of these factors is concerned, it is a valuable contribution made by the author to our knowledge of Sikh history. But his theory of gradual evolution of the Sikh code of discipline in the course of the 18th century needs to be scrutinized with great care. His main argument is based on the fact that the *Rahitnamas* are of later origin. Moreover, the prohibitions of *halal* meat, tobacco and intercourse with Muslim women do not, according to him, truly belong to the situation of Guru Gobind Singh's days. Stretching his argument the author expresses the view that the different ingredients of this code owed their origin primarily to the cultural

patterns of the Jats who dominated the 18th century Sikh politics. Now, it is possible that certain minor elements might have appeared at a later date but this cannot be said about the basic code. For instance, there is absolutely no doubt left regarding the Tenth Guru's injunction about uncut hair if we peruse his *Hukamnamas* issued after the 1699 Baisakhi. The Comb being a necessary accompaniment of the uncut hair may also be presumed to have existed from the beginning. Sword called *Kard* or *Kirpan* was an object of high veneration with the Guru and in all probability formed part of the original code. *Karra* being a defensive weapon was paired with the sword. As regards *Kaccha* (breeches), it is mentioned as part of Sikh code in *Prem Sumarg*, a book written within a decade of last Guru's death. Therefore, this also may be presumed to have existed from the first. Significantly, Dr McLeod has also admitted that a certain code was enforced by the Guru when the *Khalsa* was created in 1699. The confusion about this has arisen mainly because all Five Ks. are not found mentioned together in contemporary or near contemporary works.

Dr McLeod has mentioned that the tradition of the uncut hair originally prevailed among the Jats, wherefrom it entered into the Sikh code. This is a big assumption for which the author has cited no supporting evidence. On the face of it, this does not seem to be correct. Jats are also found among Hindus and Muslims. If the uncut hair was a cherished Jat tradition, then how is it that hundreds and thousands of Hindu and Muslim Jats in the country have no attachment to it.

Nevertheless, it may be conceded that the critical state of affairs in which the Sikh had to wage their life-and-death struggle against their adversaries during the 18th century demanded of the Sikh, a stricter observance of the code than perhaps was the case before. Thereby, the discipline in the ranks of the Sikh warriors was greatly strengthened and the code acquired a new significance symbolic of the sacred tradition of the Tenth Master, *Dasmesh*.

The remaining three essays, 2nd, 4th and 5th deal respectively with *Janamsakhis*, Sikh scripture and caste in the Sikh Panth. The essay on *Janamsakhis* is probably the best of the whole lot. It explains their nature, purpose and function and also attempts a historical assessment of the material. He characterises the *Janamsakhi* material as hagiographical rather than biographical literature. Even so, he has admitted that the *janamsakhis* despite all their shortcomings are an indispensable source for the biography of Guru Nanak. He has also suggested some tests with the help of which we may shift the necessary data for the purpose. However, he regards the *Janamsakhis* much more important for the study

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of the 17th century Punjab, from which they emerged, e.g., the image of Guru Nanak cherished by Sikhs during this period, the functioning of the emergent *Panth*, the general Sikh outlook about their faith and the rural Punjab society. This is no doubt unquestionable though one may differ with the author on some points of difference marked by him from earlier Sikh tradition associated directly with Guru Nanak's period, as also to some extent about his rating of the *Janamsakhis* as a source for the life of Guru Nanak.

The essay on Sikh scriptures is full of useful factual information about *Adi Granth*, *Dasam Granth*, *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas and writings of Bhai Nand Lal Goya. This information will be beneficial not only to western readers but also to many of our own readers. The greater part of the essay is devoted to the first and most important Sikh scripture *Adi Granth* or *Guru Granth Sahib*. The central place it occupies in Sikh customs, the high veneration in which it is held among the Sikh community, its contents, its message and certain textual problem have all been discussed with clarity rare for a foreign writer on this subject. He has taken cognizance of the controversy regarding the three versions of *Adi Granth*, namely *Adi Bir*, *Khari Bir* (Bhai Banno wali), *Damdami Bir* but has left the problem unsolved on account of his having no personal knowledge of the *Adi Bir* at Kartarpur. He has also tried to make the point that during the first two and a half centuries of its existence, possession of *Adi Bir*, though naturally something to be highly prized, was not an issue of high importance and that the significant change in this respect came with the rise of Singh Sabha and the arrival of the printing press.

*Dasam Granth*, though of such high importance, has been disposed of in a page and a half. Naturally, the account is too sketchy. As his overall assessment of the work he says that "as expression of the Sivaliks' impact upon the Jat culture of the Punjab plains the *Dasam Granth* is a historical source of critical importance for any analysis of the evolution of the Sikh Panth" and he recommends its study from this angle.

The *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas and the works of Bhai Nand Lal Goya are dismissed in one paragraph each. At the end there is a brief reference to *janamsakhis* which are here regarded as semi-canonical for the reason that they are commonly read within the precincts of gurdwaras. His overall view of all these works may be judged from his concluding statement: "World is poorer for its ignorance of the Sikh scriptures." He makes a plea for their apt translations into foreign languages.

In his last essay, *Caste in the Sikh Panth*, Dr McLeod has critically examined whether or not any caste considerations have existed or now

exist in the Sikh community. His conclusion is that though the Sikh Gurus abolished the caste system in the religious sphere completely, they could do it in social matters only partially. In his own words, "whereas they were vigorously opposed to the *vertical* distinctions of caste they were content to accept it in terms of its *horizontal* linkages," which means in concrete term that the Gurus allowed caste fraternities to exist and to govern their matrimonial and other social relations on the basis of their castes insofar as they determined their relations with other caste groups along egalitarian lines. This position, according to the author has more or less prevailed in the Sikh community since the Guru's period. At present, too, the community is not wholly free from social strains arising from the existence within its ranks of several social groups such as Jats, Khattris, Aroras, Ramgarhias, Mazhabis and Ramdasias. All the same, the writer has admitted that all through their history the Sikhs in their social organisation have borne the imprint of their Gurus' egalitarian teaching to a considerable extent and have been remarkably free from the evil effects of the system. Here, as it will be seen, Dr McLeod has taken the mean line between the two extremes namely (i) the Sikh Gurus abolished the caste system completely and established full equality and (ii) they abolished caste distinction in the religious field only. Obviously, the position taken up by him is nearer the mark. Where he has erred is that he has taken a static and not dynamic view of things, so that he finds no material difference between the position under the Gurus and that which marked the later periods of Sikh history. The correct position appears to be that the process of liquidation of caste differentiations started by Guru Nanak reached its culmination under Guru Gobind Singh when a completely casteless society was established in the form of the Khalsa. Since the overall objective reality in the country remained what it was, a few pernicious elements of the caste system reappeared subsequently, particularly under Brahmanical influences. Even so, the Sikh society, as the author has rightly observed, has remained far more liberal than the Hindu society, for instance.

To sum up, this is an extremely thought-provoking but tendentious study. The author has made a few far-reaching formulations which if correct are likely to establish a new theory of development of the Sikh community. For the present they are mostly based on conjecturing and some of them may not even serve as good hypothesis. At any rate, they demand thorough investigation from scholars. On the face of it, there is substantial ground to regard them as ill-founded, and known historical evidence contradicts them. Dr McLeod has done well to underscore the role of cultural and social factors in the evolution of the Sikhs but has under-

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estimated the role of ideas in the historical process.

The book is nicely printed and has an impressive get-up. Its price is, however, somewhat on the high side.

FAUJA SINGH

*Nirukta Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (vol. II), by Dr Balbir Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, pages 44+477, Rs. 40/-.

The contextual dictionary of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* or the *Nirukta*, so denominated by its authors, is a veritable encyclopaedia of old Punjabi language and Sikh religion. It comprehends a vast canvas of linguistic and cultural information that is essential to arrive at a transparent screen of Sikh tradition on which are projected the basic concepts of our faith.

The book under review is the second volume of the *Nirukta* published by the Punjabi University, Patiala. This stupendous project was inaugurated by Dr Balbir Singh at Dehradun. After his demise a few years ago, the research and compilation of relevant material continued at Patiala under the guidance of Dr G. S. Anand.

This is the first time that the importance of proper semantic field within the context of the tradition of Punjabi language and culture has been realised. In medieval Indian scholarship there are instances of good contextual work but with the advent of philology all explanatory research in language was reduced to giving equivalents in Sanskrit or other classical languages. This naive approach that was popular under the name of etymology ignored the basic semantic structure of conceptual delineations where the synchronic context alone could present the new emerging thought patterns. It is highly commendable that Dr Anand and his assistants have worked within the framework of this unified semantic field of our tradition and have been successful in separating the basic points of departure of Sikh philosophy.

This volume deals with words from *agah* to *are*—cards 1797-3325. The plan of execution is fairly simple. Each word is followed by its full context with references to other possible occurrences in the text. Fortunately, these words are not used as simple items of diction but as required in such an enterprise each word is treated as a concept. Whenever necessary as in the case of *anand*, *achet*, *achhal*, *ajapa*, *anik*, *Aphari*, *abgat*, *arjan*, *arpai*, etc., detailed references are given and the differences with traditional thought are duly noted. And, the most important contribution of this highly scholarly work is that it is presented in an extremely simple idiom, so unusual these days of pseudo-scholarship, that it becomes the most useful explanatory companion of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

HARJEET SINGH GILL



*The Sikh Guru and their Shrines*, by Surinder Singh Johar, Vivek Publishing Company, Delhi, 1976, pp. x + 328, price Rs. 65.00.

*The Sikh Gurus and their Shrines* by S.S. Johar is a welcome addition to the existing guides to the Sikh shrines. Apart from furnishing detailed information about a large number of shrines in and outside India, the author has also laboured to explain the place of the Guru and the Gurdwara in the Sikh way of life, important Sikh ceremonials, codes of conduct, meaning of Sikh prayer and other distinctive features of the Sikh religion and philosophy. The first four chapters deal with the origin and development of the Sikh faith and its institutions. Here the author has mainly discussed the Sikh concept of God. He could have done much better if he had also given in the beginning a brief history of Sikhism tracing its evolution through the centuries. While discussing the important position of the Guru in the lives of the followers, the author writes that "the Sikh Gurus were perfect and are described as such in *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*" and then quotes following line "Everybody else is subject to error" in support of the above (p. 13). Without contending the question of perfection I wish to point out that this inference seem to have been wrongly drawn. The line in question is from Guru Nanak (*Adi Granth*, p. 61) and talks of the perfection of the *Gurū-Kārtar* and not of the Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak, who describes himself as *Kūkar*, *Dhādi* and *Dās* of the Creator, did not claim any perfection for himself. Nor did he claim any privileged position as "the son of God" like Christ. The tenth Sikh Guru, who describes himself as the "slave of the Creator" (*Main ho Param Purakh ko Dāsā*) warns his followers at pain of going to hell to desist from calling him God. The way he created the *Khālsā* and then received baptism at their hands in order to become their equal points to the spirit of humility, democracy and equality in Sikhism. In his *Khālsā Mehnā* he describes the Khalsa as his own image (*Khālsā mero rūp hai khās*) and not only accepts the Khalsa as his equal but assigns the latter a position higher than his own (*Gurū Bees Biswe, Sangat Ikkī Biswe*).

The real theme of the book starts from chapter V onward wherein the author attempts a detailed narrative of the daily routine in the Sikh Gurdwaras. Since the present title deals with the Gurus and their Shrines, a detailed evolution of the institution of Gurdwaras should have been given. Here the author has boldly pointed to some of the rites and rituals which have gradually crept into the Sikh way of life such as *Aarti*, consecrating water by keeping it under the holy book, etc. These and a number of other practices, which do not conform to the teachings of the Gurus, should go. In the succeeding chapters, the author has given a detailed

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account of the Sikh Gurus and the shrines associated with them. In his narrative the author has depended mainly on the *Sakhi* versions, taking little notice of the latest works on most of the themes dealt with by him (e.g., Guru Tegh Bahadur's dialogue with Kashmiri Brahmans, his son Govind Rai, Emperor Aurangzeb and the *Darogha* of the Kotwali at Delhi, pp. 217-28). Some of his interpretations seem to be the result of his highly stretched imagination (e.g., *Kulnash* being interpreted as "disregarder of rituals and ceremonies"). It would have greatly enhanced the value of his work if the author had followed the accepted norms of scholarly writings and given authorities for long and verbatim quotations given throughout the book. A large number of printing and other mistakes and an unsystematic bibliography have further marred the value of this informative work.

MOHINDER SINGH

*An Indian Guerilla War—The Sikh Peoples War 1699-1768*, by Arjan Das Malik, pub. Wiley Eastern Ltd., New Delhi, 1975, pp. 124, price not mentioned.

That the Sikh people during the eighteenth century acted upon Guru Govind Singh's well known saying that 'When all means have failed, it is lawful to take the sword in hand' has been successfully exemplified by Mr. Arjan Das Malik in his *An Indian Guerilla War*.

Soon after the death of Emperor Akbar, the Mughal rulers, under the incitement of the Naqshbandi revivalists, adopted the policy of suppressing the teachings of non-Muslim religions in the country. The first victim of this policy was the fifth Sikh preceptor, Guru Arjun, who was ordered to be tortured to death by Emperor Jahangir because of the popularity of his teachings among the Hindus and Muslims. His son and successor, Guru Hargobind, was imprisoned for a number of years. Emperor Aurangzeb ordered the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur for expressing sympathy with the Brahmans of Kashmere whom he wished to be converted to Islam. The author has referred to these in brief, as also to the pre-1699 days of Guru Gobind Singh. He has then narrated at some length the circumstances that led the Sikh people as a whole to stand up like one man to resist the tyranny of the Mughal Emperors, particularly after December 1710, when, according to the *Akhbar-i-Darbar-Mualla*, Emperor Bahadur Shah issued a royal *farman* for an indiscriminate general massacre of the Sikh people wherever found—*Nanak-prastan ra har ja kih ba-yaband ba-qatal rasanamad*. And this *farman* was repeated by Emperor Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719) in almost the same words, and the Sikhs were hunted down and massacred as a general policy of the Mughal govern-

ment up to November 1753, when Mir Mannoo, the governor of the Panjab, was dragged to death by his frightened horse during a Sikh-hunting expedition. During these four decades and a half the Sikhs were left with no alternative other than to retire to jungles, mountains and deserts and from there to rush out occasionally to pounce upon their persecutors to defend or rescue their kith and kin and brothers in faith and to protect their sacred shrines.

It was during this period of adversity that the Sikhs developed their guerilla way of fighting which Mr. Arjan Das Malik has successfully traced and described in this book. "Their entire theory of war," says he, "is summed up in the words *Dhai Phatt* or two and a half injuries"—a surprise offensive, defensive disengagement and a short swift action in which the enemy is denied the use of his superior military might." "In those days when retreat meant rout, and dispersal meant defeat, the Sikhs successfully dispersed to operate and returned to renew the attack. These were entirely new elements which the Sikh introduced in the north Indian warfare of the period during review" (1699-1768).

The Sikhs of the eighteenth century had a sacred cause to fight for, and they ultimately succeeded in freeing their mother-land from under the galling yoke of the Mughal tyrants and Afghan usurpers. For presenting this all in a forthright style to its readers, Mr Malik's book is a welcome addition to the military history of the Sikhs.

GANDA SINGH

*Bhai Vir Singh* : by Harbans Singh, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1972, price : Rs. 2.50.

This Sahitya Akademi publication in the series, Makers of Indian Literature, is perhaps so far the only one on a Punjabi writer. The choice of Bhai Vir Singh for this purpose is amply justified, for he is virtually the father of modern Punjabi literature, both verse and prose. This small book of exactly a hundred pages gives a succinct and well-connected account of Bhai Vir Singh's achievements.

Professor Harbans Singh has divided his study into eight chapters, the first of which is devoted to Bhai Vir Singh's *milieu* and general religious activity. The last, entitled 'The Man and His Impact,' sums up the author's impression and view of Bhai Vir Singh's personality and total achievement. Of the four central chapters, one is given to his novels, one to his greatest work, *Rana Surat Singh*, one to his shorter poems and one to his learned works. Professor Harbans Singh's acuteness of observation and discipline of expression transcend the limitations of

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space. Remarking on the way in which Bhai Vir Singh ends the story of his first novel, *Sundari*, Harbans Singh writes : "This answerability to this world and the beyond, this affirmation of existentialist reality and the eternal joy of the spirit, this mutuality of the vertical and horizontal planes sum up the essence of Sikh philosophy. This philosophy is the core of Bhai Vir Singh's *weltanschauung*. His works, in their deeper meaning, are an elaboration of this meaning."

But in his admiration of Bhai Vir Singh, the poet-artist, Harbans Singh does not turn a blind eye to the shortcomings in his work. "But the canvas is essentially too limited," he writes, "to capture in all its nuances the impulse which moved those times. At places the story takes the form of simple historical narration . " In the text there are also references to contemporary degeneration and weakness. Characterization is incipient and satatic. Coincidences abound. The moralistic intent is too obvious.

"Yet *Sundari* is a brave, thrilling tale. The plot as suspense and drama. The fortunes fluctuate and the interest of the story is kept alive till the end." That beautifully sums up the qualities of this small novel that have made it the darling of Punjabi reading public to this day and brought its total sales to hundreds of thousands.

About the three novels in this category, Harbans Singh has again very discriminating and illuminating remarks to make. "In spite of the unity of theme and purpose, each of the three novels had its own individuality. *Bijay Singh* contained an intriguing human situation in the ruling Begum of Lahore, falling in love with the principal character. *Satwant Kaur* evoked the pathos of those helpless times when the country lay at the mercy of invaders from across the border. *Sundari* was conceived with a poetic tenderness which made it the superior of the other two."

About *Rana Surat Singh*, Harbans Singh says with a similar sureness of touch : "To enter the imaginative and poetic world of *Rana Surat Singh* is to encounter the mind and soul of Bhai Vir Singh at their subtlest and most intimate. In this epic of more than twelve thousand lines, his genius and his ultimate concerns are more authentically expressed than anywhere else." Though Bhai Vir Singh's subtlest is perhaps not subtle enough.

Harbans Singh is right in saying that *Rana Surat Singh* marks in several ways the highest point in his long and prolific literary career. Very true, but it has also revealed to a different category of reader and critic, limitations of Bhai Vir Singh's social and political outlook and his incapacity to rise above contemporary interests.

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Puran Singh and Dhani Ram Chatrik. But Bhai Vir Singh's influence is by no means confined to these two eminent personalities. It is certainly much wider and Harbans Singh is perhaps modest in this direction than he needed to be.

A word about Harbans Singh's English style would not be out of place here. He is an accomplished writer of English prose, who seems to have read his Walter Pater well. In urbanness and polished expression and in correctness of phrase, Harbans Singh is unbeaten among Indian writers of English prose. But to the regret of many of his friends, owing to lack of ambition, he has not cultivated and exploited this line of achievement.

SANT SINGH SEKHON

*Beyond the Village Sociological Explorations*, Edited by Satish Saberwal, I.I.A.S., Simla, 1972.

The book presents the proceedings of a 'purely professional seminar' organized by the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, in 1970, to which only the sociologists and social antropologists were invited. 276 pages proceedings of the seminar are divided into two parts : the Preliminaries, spreading to only 18' pages consists of the 'Inaugural Words' by Prof. Niharanjan Ray, the then Director of the Institute, Introduction by Prof. Gore and a brief Editorial Note by the editor, Satish Saberwal, then a Fellow in the Institute. Part two contains four papers presented to the seminar, record of discussion on each paper-appended to each study, discussion record of the concluding session; list of participants and a brief name and subject index. Besides there is a brief Preface by Prof. Dube, the Director of the Institute at the time of the publication of the book in 1972.

Noting, that the sociologists have concerned themselves mainly in theory building by testing their hypothesis on studies at micro-level, which are not very helpful in understanding the macro-structures, Prof. Ray has exhorted them to undertake socially motivated and problem oriented research which may be useful to the planner, and to evolve a sociology of India in a macro-scale and dimension. The editor has also noted that the aim of the seminar was to 'discern more clearly the various research strategies available for understanding the macro phenomena in Indian society.'

Prof. Gore's Introduction goes a long way in helping the reader understand the issues involved in the studies which are highly technical. All the papers presented here cover various aspects of urban phenomena so the book might have been named something like *Contributions to*

*Urban Sociology*, but the fact that it has been named *Beyond the Village* indicates the bias of the anthropologists, who have started 'explorations' outside their traditional domain.

The first paper, *Projet CLAPP: Studying Political Behaviour in a Region* by jogesh Atal, presents the methodology part of the report that has been published somewhere else. The study was aimed at finding the relationship between communication and political behaviour. In this paper the author has given in detail the factors that inspired him to undertake this study, how he worked out his research design, how he formulated his hypothesis, how he selected these communities, how he drew his sample, how the field work was carried on, the type of personnel and its working, the problems of group research and how he got the things through the University administration. As the study required the interviewing the same sample thrice, he was struck by the extent of sample loss, the causes of which have been listed, but adequate attention has not been given to the carelessness with which the bureaucracy prepares electoral rolls (from where he drew his sample), and negligence of the investigators. Moreover as initial sample loss in Coc, L.C. and SC is 53.8, 43.7, and 24.9%, respectively, it seems that the role of special mobility (in between the time of the preparation of electoral rolls and the commencement of the elections), which tends to increase with the size of the community has not been properly highlighted. Because of the minuteness of the details in designing the project and carrying it out, this paper can well be prescribed for the trainees in social research at post graduate level.

In his study of *Doctors in a North Indian City*, Madan, on the basis of his findings about 37 doctors of Ghaziabad, seeks to find out the patterns of recruitment, role performance and role perception among the doctors. About recruitment to the profession he concludes that the doctors are drawn more (i) from the Hindu than non-Hindu community; (ii) from upper than lower castes; (iii) from rich rather than poor families; (iv) from urban rather than rural areas. Besides they are young rather than old; (ii) men rather than women; (iii) married rather than unwed. Choice of profession is determined almost totally by near kins, and factors affecting it are economic gains, idea of 'service,' prestige, family stability and material comforts. However, the patients did not feel that doctors were guided by the idea of 'service' or the needs of the patient. Instead they are guided by material gains. The author has focussed the attention on private practitioners, and though the doctors working in hospitals have been included in the sample, little is given about them as a category. He has applied the concept of 'encounter' to describe patient-

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doctor relationship but the fact that the people have 'family doctors' indicates the probability of a rather enduring relationship.

In his study of *Status, Mobility and Network in a Punjab Industrial Town* (Phagwara) which he calls Modelpur, Satish Saberwal tries to combine historico-anthropological methodology to show that in a changing society, where different caste groups have been trying to improve their position, vis-a-vis others, the mobility is partly a function of one's place in the traditional caste hierarchy, which means that those who occupy higher position in the traditional set up, tend to remain at the top even in the newly emerging structure. This is a well established reality but his contribution lies in explaining the process underlying this mobility in a highly sophisticated sociological terminology. He has shown how the Ramgarhias already occupying a high place in Sikh society acquired a still higher place in industrial, educational, economic and occupational domains (to which he can now add political domain also). This mobility he attributes to (i) superiority of their skill in relation to other regions, (2) Sikh tradition of *sangat*, and (3) the impact of Punjab Land Alienation Acts. Occupational basis of the *chamars* was also eroded and in the new set up they also improved their position more than the Balmikis, partly because the latter occupied a lower place in the traditional hierarchy and partly because their occupational basis was not so seriously disturbed. The author has noted that whereas previously the efforts were made at raising the status of the group, now the stress is on individual mobility. In this study one has to tread through the rather deeply ploughed fields of theoretical formulations stated in terms of highly technical jargon, and to struggle hard to find the way out of the jungle of the details narrated therein. The mobility of these communities could have been better understood if it had been described in the context of the historical and geographical setting of the Punjabi society where agricultural and commercial castes have shown equal dynamism in their respective fields.

Yogendra Singh in his paper on *Academic Role Structure* has sought to measure the extent to which the teachers of the University of Rajasthan at Jaipur are modernized. Of these teachers only 0.4% belong to lower castes and 1.2% to minority communities. Modernity has been characterized in four ways, i.e., Universalistic structural, Universalistic ideology, psychic and cultural and superficial symbolic. All these traits have been measured and four types of roles deduced which are: pure traditional, transitional traditional, modern transitional and pure modern. In this paper the author has operationalized highly theoretical concepts and given sociological currency to laymans concept-modernity.

Viewed in the light of the declared aims of the seminar, the book has simply failed to respond. Neither has it provided a macro view of Indian society, nor made any significant contribution towards the development of methodology for that except a few suggestions the editor has made in his note. Nor has it responded to the needs of planners. Perhaps, the very nature of the congregation was not suitable for that. Had the Institute been serious about these aims, it could have done so by making a team of scholars drawn from various disciplines and planners to work jointly to build a coherent macro view of Indian society which may have provided proper understanding of this society. Therefore, Prof. Dube seems to have rightly concluded that the real value of the book lies in raising new questions rather than in proposing solutions to the old problems.

The studies have been arranged in ascending order—further one goes more difficult the reading tends to become. Dube's certificate for the editor for being unsparing without being ununderstanding, careful and critical, but always extremely painstaking and meticulous, is well deserved as editing, printing and get up are really of high order. The only significant lapse is the absence of detailed table of contents before Madan's paper.

The book being a dialogue among the sociologists and social anthropologists is very useful for the persons in the profession. Others may not purchase it. The price has not been prescribed.

PARKASH SINGH JAMMU

*Catalogue of Punjabi Printed Books*, compiled by Dr Ganesh Gaur, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 1975, pp. xi+404, price £ 17.50.

The catalogue under review is a welcome addition to the growing bibliographic literature on the Panjab. The India Office Library, London, is perhaps, the richest repository in the world where one can find most of the printed material (and also the records) relating to Panjab under one roof. Thanks to the sense of acquisition and preservation of the custodians of the Library, scholars interested in the history and literature of the Panjab can still find some of the very old and rare material which is not available anywhere else.

The catalogue is alphabetically arranged, authorwise, and covers the period from 1902 to 1964, during which over 6000 Panjabi books dealing with various subjects were acquired by the India Office Library. The value of the present catalogue is further enhanced by the Title and Subject Indices given at the end. Notwithstanding the reference value of the work, its practical use to those interested in the Panjab and its literature



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is restricted firstly because of the high price and consequent limited availability outside the United Kingdom and, secondly, even if a few manage to get hold of a copy, they will be dismayed to find that some of the very useful material catalogued in the book is beyond their reach to consult. So far exploiting these rich repositories outside India remains the privilege of a few. For a large number of scholars genuinely interested in the Panjab and its literature, consulting such materials at London (and more unfortunately even nearer home at Lahore) remains a far off cry. How I wish the Government of the Panjab (India) and the Universities in the State arrange to get microfilm or Xerox copies of some of the rare publications from India Office Library, the British Museum and the Lahore Records Office to help growing research studies on the Panjab.

Efforts of Miss Eileen M. Dimes in completing the unfinished task of the late Dr Gaur are commendable indeed. But for her labour the pioneering venture of Dr Gaur would not have seen the light of the day so soon.

MOHINDER SINGH

#### CORRESPONDENCE

##### Bhai Kanhaiya

##### The Indian Precursor of the Red Cross Movement

Bhai Kanhaiya of the Sewapanthi order of the Sikhs was born at Sodhra in the district of the Gujrat (Pakistan) in about 1648 (1705 Bikrami). He was the son of a revenue official, a Shikdar, and belonged to a rich family. He, however, had a religious bent of mind and was fond of the company of saints. His favourite saint was one Bhai Nanooa of Wazirabad. On the death of his father, Bhai Kanhaiya succeeded him in his official position. During one of his tours, he heard in his camp a Sikh reciting the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, and was deeply impressed by his message of detachment towards things mundane. This created in his mind a strong desire to see the Guru himself, and he went to Anandpur for the purpose. But the Guru was then out on a tour of the Malwa territory, and Bhai Kanhaiya saw him at Daroli Bhai in the district of Ferozepur in about the year 1731 Bk., 1674 A. D. There was something in the *darshan* of the great Master and in the spirit of service that he saw in the *Sangat* of the Sikhs accompanying the Guru that gave a new turn to his life. In

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Written in reply to the letter dated July 18, 1977, from Shri S.L. Arora, District Officer, St. John Ambulance Brigade (India), District Kapurthala.

54. Dr Kirpal Singh, The Role of the Akali Party in the Freedom Struggle.
55. Dr Parkash Singh, Changing Caste structure in rural Punjab.
56. Dr S.K. Bajaj, European Historians on the Punjab (1780-1846).
57. S. Rajinder Singh, The Sewa Panthis.
58. Sh. R.N. Misra, Strategic Analysis of the Fourth Arab-Israel War.
59. Dr Joginder Singh, Anglo-Sikh Relations under Auckland.
60. S. Param Bakhshish Singh, Shardha Ram Phillauri as an historiographer.
61. Dr S.K. Bajaj, The Punjab and the Revolt of 1857.
62. Dr Y.P. Bajaj, A detailed study of the National Unionist Party and its Role in Punjab Politics.
63. Dr S.D. Pradhan, Mao Tse-Tung as a Historian.
64. S. Amarjit Singh Dhillon, The Rise of Regional States in India.
65. Dr Fauja Singh, Guru Tegh Bahadur—some important aspects.
66. S. Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, The Aims and Objectives of Guru Gobind Singh.
67. Dr J. Barrier, Some current trends in Panjab History 1880-1920.
68. Sh. Bisheshwar Prasad, Historical Methodology.
69. S. Jora Singh, Khyal and Tappa Singers' contribution to Punjabi culture.
70. Sh. Y.P. Bajaj, Land revenue reform of the Unionist party.
71. S. Parkash Singh, Changing habitation pattern of a Punjab village.
72. Dr Fauja Singh, Dr Gokal Chand Narang as a Historiographer.
73. Dr S.K. Bajaj, The basis of the authority of Ranjit Singh.
74. Dr Niharranjan Ray, Lectures on history.
75. Dr A.C. Arora, British policy towards the Punjab States between 1885-1905.
76. Dr Kirpal Singh, Saif Khan and his relations with Guru Tegh Bahadur.
77. Dr S.K. Bajaj, Haryana and the Revolt of 1857.
78. Dr Kirpal Singh, The Cripps Mission of 1942 and the Sikhs.
79. S. G. S. Sachdeva, Social Basis of British rule in India.
80. Dr Fauja Singh, Early European writers on the Sikhs.
81. Dr Dalip Singh, Voting pattern in India.
82. Dr S.K. Bajaj, Evolution of the Sikh Community.
83. Dr A.C. Arora, Toynbee's view on transformation of Sikhism.
84. Dr S.S. Bal, M'Gregor's History of the Sikhs.

## The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studied in Historical Setting

GANDA SINGH

With the 10th November, 1976, has ended the tercentenary year of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth *Guru* of the Sikhs. He was executed at Delhi on November 11, 1675, under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb under the impression, according to the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn*, that the Guru might lead a rebellion of his Sikh followers against his Empire in the Panjab, at a time when he was busy in suppressing a relentless war of the Afghans on its north-western frontier.

The charges levelled against the Guru, according to the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* of Munshi Ghulam Husain Khan, were that :

- (i) Guru Tegh Bahadur and Hafiz Adam, a disciple of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, had got around them many followers and having come together, both of them moved about the Panjab extracting money by force (*akhz-i-wajah ba jabr-o-taaddī*);
- (ii) 'No wonder that if their power increased, they might also sally forth in a hostile manner.'

"Hearing this" from the royal intelligencers, says he, "Alamgir (Aurangzeb) wrote to the governor of Lahore that, having arrested both of them he should deport Hafiz Adam from the government country to the native land of the Afghans on the other side of the Attock and Peshawar, not allowing him to return to this side, and that Tegh Bahadur might be fettered and detained in prison (*muqaiyad-o-Mahbus darand*). So this was done according to the order" [p. 401].

According to William Irvine [*Later Mughals*, i. 79] :

"One of this Guru's crimes, in the Emperor's eyes, may have been the style of address adopted by his disciples, who had begun to call their leader *Sachā Pādshāh* or the 'True King.' This title was readily capable of the two-fold interpretation; it might be applied as the occasion served in a spiritual and literal sense. Its use was extremely likely to provoke the mistrust of a ruler even less suspicious by nature than Alamgir." (Also see Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pub. 1849, pp. 68, 79, fn.)

Irvine further says that Trumpp (and also many others) "relies on

J. D. Cunningham's *History*" which "depends in turn on the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* (Briggs, 112), a far from contemporary work, for it was written in 1783 (Dowson and Elliot, viii, 196). I do not know the source of Ghulam Husain's information" (p. 79, fn.).

Evidently, the author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* had no reliable documentary evidence on the basis of which he has levelled the above charges against Guru Tegh Bahadur. There is no reference to them in any of the official or non-official records of the time. Nor does any contemporary or near contemporary historical or biographical works make any mention of them. Apparently they were the creation of Ghulam Husain's own imagination to explain or to justify the orders issued by Emperor Aurangzeb under which the Guru was executed, as mentioned in the contemporary work, the *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh* of Munshi Sujān Rai Bhandari of Batala—written in 1697-98. According to this work "Guru Hargobind's youngest son Tegh Bahadur remained Guru for eleven years and, at last, having been imprisoned by the king's nobles, was, according to the order of Emperor Aurangzeb, executed at Shahjahanabad in 1086 al-Hijri."

To this plain fact, Ghulam Husain Khan adds from his own that the Guru was a companion and an accomplice of Hafiz Adam, of the sect of the disciple of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, and that the two moved together in the Panjab extracting money by force from the Hindus and Muslims, and "no wonder that if their power increased they might *also* sally forth in a hostile manner."

This is wrong on the very face of it and can not stand the test of historical scrutiny. The Guru was at no time in his life either a companion of Hafiz Adam in his tour of the Panjab or an accomplice of his in extracting money from the Hindus and Muslims. The Hafiz had been banished from the Panjab in 1642 by Emperor Shahjahan, father of Emperor Aurangzeb, on the recommendation of his minister Sadullah Khan, with orders not to be allowed to return to the east of the river Attock. Thereupon, he had left the country for pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and had died there in December 1643 (Shawwal 1053 al-Hijri). This took place during the Guruship of the sixth Guru Hargobind, twenty-one years before the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur came to the *gaddi* in 1664 and thirty-two years before his martyrdom in 1675. (*Vide* Kamal-ud-Din Ahsan's *Rauzā-tu-Qayūmīā*, p. 178; Nazir Ahmad's *Tazkirāt-u-Ābidīn*, pp. 124-25; *Mirat-i-Jahān Numā*, Rampur, p. 606; Ghulam Nabi's *Mirat-ut-Qaunīn*, p. 417; Mirza Muhammad Akhtir's *Tazkirāh-i-Hind-o-Pākistān*, p. 401; G. S. Anand, *Gurū Tegh Bahādur*, thesis, typescript, etc.)

#### THE MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR STUDIED IN HISTORICAL SETTING

Guru Tegh Bahadur travelled through the cis-Sutlej Panjab in 1665 on his way to the eastern provinces and then in 1673-74, some time after his return from the east. The second and the last tour of the Malwa and the Bangar was undertaken thirty-one year after the death of Hafiz Adam in Arabia, purely for missionary purposes, as we find in the *Srī Gurū Tegh Bahādur jīo té Srī Gurū Gobind Singh jīo dé Mālwa Dēs Rattan di Sākhi Pothi* and *The Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh*, translated by Sardar Attar Singh, 1876. No other motive can by any stretch of imagination be attributed to the Guru, much less of extracting money from the people or exciting them for hostility against the Mughal empire, as hinted at and suggested by the author of the *Sīyar-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* in the name of the Royal Intelligencers.

The allegation against the Guru that, having got around him many followers, he had become a man of great influence and many thousand people moved along with him and that he forcibly extracted money from the Hindus, is a gross misrepresentation of facts. The Imperial Intelligencers could not have been ignorant of the practice of the Sikhs of visiting the Guru at his headquarters for his *darshan* on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali when several thousand Sikhs, men, women and children, from all over the country collected there and presented their offerings to him. But in 1673-4 he was touring the Malwa and Bangar territory in keeping with the practice of the first Guru Nanak and of his own father the Sixth Guru Hargobind. And, as he had been there after a number of years, there was, naturally, larger assemblage of Sikh devotees at his congregations, with proportionate increase in their offerings. In addition to the people who came to see him from places other than those where he was encamped, quite a large number of devotees came to receive and welcome him to their village and also accompanied him for some distance to see him off when he left their village to go to the next. And these could not have been more than a few hundred spiritual-minded peasant devotees. They were not his permanent companions and, generally, they returned to their homes in a day or two. They visited the Guru purely out of their devotion to him and for their spiritual guidance and satisfaction. The offerings made by them on these occasions were all voluntary and this practice still continues among the Sikhs. Whenever they go to a Sikh meeting where the *Guru Granth Sahib*, their holy scripture, is installed, they bow to it and place their offerings in front of it.

To the Guru, these offerings were a sacred trust of the community to be spent for the general benefit of the people. In the arid Bangar area, he encouraged the digging and repairing of water tanks and sinking of

wells for irrigation and drinking purposes. While asking a Sikh *Masand*, Daggio of Dhamthan, to have the tank of Guruser dredged and repaired and to have a well sunk there, he gave him one hundred and one gold mohars and at the same time "warned him to be honest in the matter, as the money had been raised for charitable purposes, and any misappropriation would lead to his ruin." (*Sakhi* No. 33, Attar Singh trans., p. 33; also *Sakhis* 15, 19.)

The casual visitors of the Guru during his tours, and those who accompanied him from one place to another, were pious devotees and carried no arms. The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* himself confirms this, saying :

*Ammā hamrāhīyān-i-Tegh Bahādur ba-taur fuqrā mī-gardīdand wa salah-o-yarāq bastan darmiān-i-shan mamūl na būd,*

that is,

"But the companions of Tegh Bahadur moved about like mendicants. The wearing of swords and arms was not customary among them."

It may be mentioned that Munshi Ghulam Husain Khan wrote his book at a time when the Sikhs had freed the Panjab from the Mughals and had pushed back the Afghan usurpers. Both of these happened to be the co-religionists of his. It was but natural, therefore, that he should have been influenced by his prejudices against the Sikhs. This, to a great extent, explains the background of the allegations levelled against the Guru in the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*. But the greatest harm to history was done by the wrongful translations of this work<sup>1</sup> by M. Raymond (*Nota Manus*) published in 1789 and 1902, and by John Briggs published in 1834 and 1924, which have been extensively used by historians like John Malcolm, Joseph D. Cunningham, Syed Mohammad Latif, etc., etc.

On pages 84-5, of volume I, Raymond says that "Tegh-Bahadyr, who was of such an extraordinary character as drew multitudes after him, all which as well as their leader went always armed. This man finding himself at the head of so many thousand people, became aspiring." Brigg's improves upon 'aspiring', and says he "aspired to sovereignty" (p. 74). The actual words of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* are :

*Sajjādā-nishīn-i-hashtam-i-Nānak kih Tegh Bahādur nām dāshī pairwān-i-bisiar baham rasānidā sāhib-i-iqtidār gasht wa chandīn hazār kas hamrah mī-gardīdand* (p. 401).

This may be translated as :

The eighth successor of Nanak named Tegh Bahadur, having collected many followers (or disciples), became a man of influence (dignity or power) and many thousand men moved along with him.

## THE MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR STUDIED IN HISTORICAL SETTING

There is nothing in the text to suggest that Guru Tegh Bahadur and all "his followers" went always armed and that "he aspired to sovereignty." This has been contradicted by Ghulam Husain Khan himself saying that "the companions of Tegh Bahadur moved about like mendicants. The wearing of swords and arms was not customary among them." Raymond's translation, in a number of places, it may be pointed out, is an outrage on the text which contains no words to warrant interpolations such as :

(page 85)

Lines 2-3—"All which as well as their leader went always armed."

4-5—"became aspiring"

9-10—"than forsaking every honest calling, they fell a subsisting by plunder and rapine,"

21—"Tegh Bahadur, the other free booter,"

27—"But this execution was followed by mournful consequences."

This is enough to falsify the allegations of political and social offences levelled against Guru Tegh Bahadur on the basis of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, and its translations by Raymond and Briggs.

As we have seen above, the Guru was neither a companion of Hafiz Adam nor an accomplice of his in forcible exactions of money from the people. His followers were unarmed religious devotees who could in no way turn hostile or raise a rebellion against the great Mughal empire of Emperor Aurangzeb. The Guru had neither a cause nor the intention and means for the purpose. An insurrection to be successfully launched against a well established empire needed a strong and trained army, well equipped with the latest munitions of war. Of these, the Guru had none.

It is true that the Guru was called '*Sachā Pādshāh*' by his followers. But this was not a new thing in the case of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The words *Pādshāh* (king), *Sachā Pādshāh* (True King), *Sachī Pādshāhī* (True kingdom) and *Sachā Takht* (True Throne) had been in use among the Sikhs for the Gurus, their religion, and for the seat of the Guru since the days of the fourth Guru Ramdas (1574-81)—for more than a century before the time of the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675). Bhai Gurdas (1551-1629), a contemporary of the third to the sixth Gurus, had used them in about a dozen places in his *Vārān* (vide 46, 47), 3 (6), 5 (21), 11 (1), 15 (1), 18 (20), 24 (3), 26 (1), 36 (1), 39 (3). The author of the *Dabistān-i-Muzāhib*, who was a contemporary of the sixth and the seventh Gurus Hargobind and Har Rai and was present at Kiratpur at the time of the Guru Hargobind's death in 1645, tells us on p. 233 that the Sikhs considered the Gurus, the heads or leaders of their religion, *Sachā Pādshāh* or the

true king—*Sikhān Gurū hā rā Sachā Pādshāh yānī Bādshāh-i haqīqī mī-dānand*. It is clear from these references that the Sikhs used the words *Sachā Pādshāh* for the Gurus in spiritual sense and that there was no ground for putting political interpretation on them. Emperor Aurangzeb could not have misunderstood the real sense of these words. He was a born Indian whose ancestors had been in this country for at least three generations and he understood the common Indian language.

Evidently, therefore, these allegations could not have been by themselves the cause of the arrest and execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. These could, at their worst, have added to his suspicions on hearing of his intelligencers reports about the Guru's expression of abhorrence of the Emperor's socio-religious policy in ordering the demolition of schools and temples of the non-Muslims. Emperor Aurangzeb, as history knows it, was an orthodox follower of the Sunni sect of Islam and looked askance not only at the followers of non-Muslim religions but also at the Shia and Sufi Muslims. As the Emperor's orders to the governor of Lahore for the arrest and detention of the Guru, and to his high officials at Delhi for his execution, were issued in the second half of the year 1675, when he was at Hasan Abdal on the north-western frontier of the Panjab, where he was, then, personally directing military operations against the Pathans, we have to look for some other immediate cause for them within this period.

According to Saqi Mustad Khan's *Maāsir-i-Ālamgīrī* (Sarkar, J.N., pp. 51-2) :

"His majesty, eager, to establish Islam issued orders," on April 8, 1669, "to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with utmost urgency put down the teaching and public practice of the religion of these misbelievers."

De Graaf, who was at Hoogly in 1670, tells us that :

"In the month of January, all the governors and native officers received an order from the Great Mughal prohibiting the practice of Pagan religion throughout the country and closing down all the temples and sanctuaries of idol worshippers...in the hope that some Pagans would embrace the Muslim religion."

(Orme, *A Fragment of History*, Notes, 85; Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 171.)

This narrow-minded religious fanaticism of the Emperor had resulted not only in the demolition of many Hindu temples and schools in various places in the country but also in the demolition of some Sikh Gurdwaras. According to Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb* (ii, 651-2),



#### THE MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR STUDIED IN HISTORICAL SETTING

Emperor Aurangzeb had ordered the destruction of Sikh places of worship and externment of their leaders therefrom. Mirza Inayat-ullah Ismi tells us in the *Ahkām-i-Alamgīrī* (Rampur Ms., pp. 514-5) that in compliance with the orders of the Emperor and with the consent of the local Qazi, the Sikh temple in the town of Buriya; in the *parganah* of Khizrabad of the *sarkār* of Sirhind, had been demolished and a mosque had been erected on its site.

At the time of the April 1669 order issued by Emperor Aurangzeb and its promulgation in Bengal and Assam in 1670, Guru Tegh Bahadur was in Assam. On hearing of these orders, or in the ordinary course of his programme, he returned to the Panjab and was in Delhi in December 1671/January 1672 on his way home. He was at Chak Nanaki—Makhawal—on March 29, 1672, the Baisakhi day, when Bhai Mani Singh is recorded to have had the Guru's *darshan* there. Next year in 1673 the Guru undertook an extensive tour of the Malwa and Bangar, which has been referred to above, and which continued throughout the year 1674. It was during this tour that, according to the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, he was alleged to have accompanied Hafiz Adam, exacting money from the Hindus. This having been proved to be historically wrong, the allegation falls to the ground as baseless, and the effort to paint the Guru as a political offender to justify Emperor Aurangzeb's orders for his arrest and execution miserably fails. Moreover, the Emperor during this time was at Delhi up to April 7, 1674, when he left for Hasan Abdal. Passing through Sirhind, Lahore and Rawalpindi, he arrived at Hasan Abdal on June 26, 1674. He was there up to December 23, 1675. Had there been any incriminatory reports against the Guru's activities during his tour of the Malwa and Bangar up to the beginning of the year 1675, by which the Guru had returned to his headquarters at Makhawal (Chak Nanaki), the Emperor's orders for his arrest would have been issued while the Guru was on tour, or in the first quarter of 1675. Emperor Aurangzeb was not the person to let grass grow under his feet. He was a man of quick decisions. But as the Guru's arrest was made in the second week of July 1675, several months after his return from his tour, it may be safely presumed that nothing so serious had come to be reported to the Emperor about the Guru's activities during his recent tour as to prompt him to issue the order for his arrest and detention. The cause for the order of the Guru's arrest, therefore, lay in some such event in the immediate past, say within a couple of months, as upset him to take such a drastic step.

Here the trend of events subsequent to the appointment of Nawab

Iftikhar Khan as governor of Kashmir in 1671 help us solve the problem. This was the time when the militant policy of Emperor Aurangzeb for demolishing the temples and seminaries of the non-Muslims, and converting as many of them as possible to Islam in pursuance of his orders of April 1669, was being vigorously followed in the country. Nawab Iftikhar Khan, evidently, was an enthusiastic exponent and executor of the Emperor's policy. He turned out to be more loyal to the king than the king himself. Either out of his own volition or to win the favour of the Emperor, "Iftikhar Khan (1671-75)", Says P.N.K. Bamzai in his *History of Kashmir*, p. 371, "tyrannized over the Brahmans to such an extent that they approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, at Anandpur in the Punjab and solicited his personal intervention with the emperor. This ultimately led to the Guru's martyrdom."

This evidently was suggested to them by one Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt of Mattan who had known the Guru for some time as a tutor to his young son Govind Das at Anandpur after his return from his eastern tour. Kirpa Ram must have heard of the details of his travels and conveyed to the Brahmans the impression that the Emperor also, perhaps, regarded Guru Tegh Bahadur as a saint and had not, therefore, interfered with him during his long travels throughout the eastern parts of the empire right up to east Bengal and Assam. They must have also come to know that the Guru had an admirer and a disciple in Raja Ram Singh of Jaipur whom the Emperor had re-admitted into his favour after the death of his father Mirza Raja Jai Singh. Towards the end of the year (December 27, 1667), the Raja had received further favours from the Emperor and had been deputed by him to the general command of the expeditionary force against the Assamese where the Guru had been of help to him in his negotiations for peace. Under these favourable circumstances, the Guru's intervention with the Emperor, thought the Brahmans of Kashmir, would help mitigate their persecution at the hands of Governor Iftikhar Khan.

To approach the Guru for the purpose, therefore, they selected Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt as the leader of their sixteen-man deputation and arrived at Anandpur on Jeth Sudī 11, 1732 Bikramī (May 25, 1675).

This is mentioned in the *Bhāit Vahī* Multani-Sindhi in the *Khātā Jalhānon kā* as under :

ਭਾਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਰਾਮ ਬੇਟਾ ਅਤ੍ਰੁ ਰਾਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਤਾ ਨਰੈਣ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ ਬੰਸ ਠਾਕਰ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ ਦੱਤ ਗੋਤਰਾ ਮੁਝਾਲ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਨ ਬਾਸੀ ਮਟਨ ਦੇਸ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸਿਮਤ ਸਤਰਾ ਸੋ ਬਤੀਸੇ ਜੇਠ ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਇਕਾਦਸੀ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁ ਖੋੜਸ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਨੋਂ ਗੋਲ ਗਰਾਮ ਚੱਕ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਨਾ

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ਕਹਿਲੂਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਮਾ ਕੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਆਇ ਫਰਿਆਦੀ ਹੂਆ । ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ  
ਇਸੇ ਧੀਰਜ ਦਈ । ਬਚਨ ਹੋਆ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਕੀ ਰਖਸਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ ।

(ਭਟ ਵਹੀ ਮੁਲਤਾਨੀ ਸਿੰਧੀ)

This is also supported by Sarup Singh's *Gurū Kīān Sākhīān, Sākhī* No. 25, and Sewa Singh's *Shaheed Bilās*, Nos. 33-38, pp. 59-60.

Little did the Pandits know that during the last days of the Guru's absence in the east, and since his return, there had been a marked change for the worse in the socio-religious policy of Emperor Aurangzeb and that adverse reports of the imperial intelligencers against the Guru and the Sikhs had been poisoning the Emperor's mind against him. The Guru, however, gave a very patient hearing to the suppliant Brahmans and sympathized with their cause, saying : "Guru Nanak will protect you."

Guru Tegh Bahadur's sympathetic response to the appeal of the Brahmans and his readiness for supreme sacrifice in their cause was a thing unique in history. He was neither a Brahman himself, nor did he subscribe to their way of life which prescribes the wearing of the sacred thread and putting distinctive marks on the forehead—*Janū* and *tilak*. These had no place in Sikhism. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, had not only refused to accept them for himself in his early days but had also discarded them for his followers. But their forcible removal under Imperial orders and conversion of the Brahmans against their will, were acts of great high-handedness and abuse of political power. This, Guru Tegh Bahadur protested against through his sympathy with the helpless people. To him, the freedom of belief was the birth-right of all human beings and to rob any one of it was against the spirit of humanism and human equality for which he stood and ultimately sacrificed his life.

The Guru was neither against Islam nor was he against any one embracing it with a willing heart. Sikhism, the religion of Gurus Nanak and Tegh Bahadur, is very much nearer to Islam in its concept of the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and Nawab Saif Khan, a pious Muhammadan, was one of Guru Tegh Bahadur's best friends and admirers. Love for all and malice for none is the true spirit of every religion. But Emperor Aurangzeb, in his narrow-minded fanaticism, could not see the light of Divine grace beyond his own limited sectarianism. He, at times, not only humiliated Shia Muslims and Sufi saints but also put them to death for their so-called heresies.

He was a follower of the Naqashbandi order. A grandson of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi had been deputed by his father "to guide Aurangzeb in his progress on the way, another grandson seems to have been constantly

in attendance at the royal court." (*Vide* Nizami, *Naqshbandī Influence on Mughal Rulers*, 50; Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 127.) This explains to a great extent the attitude of the Emperor towards the non-Muslims. Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi *Mujaddid-i-Alf-Sānī* was the person who could not tolerate the very existence of the non-Muslim infidels. Referring to the execution of Guru Arjan, he had written to his favourite disciple Shaikh Farid Murtaza Khan :

The execution of the accursed *Kāfir* of Goindwal at this time [soon after the death of the tolerant Akbar the Great] is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intention they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, their humiliation is a meritorious act for the Muslims...The honour and glory of Islam and the Muslims lie in the humiliation of the *Kufr* and the *Kāfirs*...The object of levying *jizya* on them is to humiliate and insult the *Kāfirs*, and *jihad* against them and hostility towards them are the necessities of the Islamic faith. (*Maktūbāt-i-Imām-i-Rabbānī*, I-iii, letter No. 193, pp. 95-6.)

The Mujaddid uses still stronger language against the non-Muslims in his letter No. 163 (*Maktūbāt*, I-iii, pp. 50-53) wherein he urged upon Shaikh Farid Murtaza Khan to humiliate and insult the *Kāfirs* in every possible way, to keep them at a distance like dogs, and to destroy them wholesale if possible. (Also see p.59; II, vii, pp. 93-94.)

With these teachings and instructions of *Mujaddid* Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to his followers, Emperor Aurangzeb, having two of the Mujaddid's grandsons to guide him, could not but do whatever was possible to put an end to the spread of the non-Muslim religious movements in the country, including the Sikh movement of which Guru Tegh Bahadur was then the head. In this he was following in the footsteps of his grandfather Emperor *Jahāngir*, who had ordered the execution of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru. According to the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngiri*, Guru Arjan "had by his ways and manners, captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay even of foolish and stupid Muslims and he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him *Guru* and from all directions, fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time I have been thinking that I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam" (p. 35).

It seems that the activities of Guru Tegh Bahadur had been under the surveillance of the Imperial Intelligencers and were occasionally reported

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to the Emperor. As soon he received the news of the Guru's sympathy with the idolatrous Brahmans of Kashmir, whom he wished to be brought into the fold of Islam, he took it as an affront to his religio-political policy. He could not brook it. It added fuel to the fire smouldering in his mind, not improbably fanned by the grandsons of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in his camp, and, from Hasan Abdal, where he was then encamped, as mentioned earlier, he wrote to the governor of Lahore "that Togh Bahadur might be arrested, fettered, and detained in prison (*muqaiyad-o-Mahbūs dārand*).” The governor, as a matter of administrative routine, passed on the royal order to Abdul Aziz Dilawar Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, who in turn asked the circle *Kotwāl* of Ropar, Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza, in whose jurisdiction Anandpur lay, to do the needful.

Professor S.R. Sharma in his *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 179, also thinks that Guru Togh Bahadur "was arrested in 1675 not at Makhawal but somewhere else in the Punjab, probably on the same charge which Jahangir had at first thought of using against Guru Arjun, being a successful teacher whom people flocked to pay respect to." He further opines : "It is possible that the arrest and subsequent execution of the Guru was the result of Aurangzeb's fanatic campaign against the active leaders of anti-Islamic thought in his dominions" (*ibid.*, p. 180).

According to Muhammad Ahsan Ijaad's *Fragment of the Farrukh Siyar Nāmā*, f. 13a (Irvine, *Later Mughals*, i, 79), Emperor Aurangzeb "Alamgir had issued the *farmān* for Togh Bahadur's arrest, but the order was kept secret." This evidently, was done to wait for a suitable opportunity to effect the arrest without any fuss and difficulty. The opportunity came to the *Kotwal* when the *Gurū* accompanied by only a few Sikhs, left Anandpur on Sawan 11, 1731 Bikrami, July 11, 1675, and arrived at the village of Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar on his way to cross the river Sutlej for his onward journey. Here he stayed at the house of a Sikh *Bhāi* Dargahia (or Nigahia). Hearing of the Guru being at hand, from the police informers deputed for the purpose, *Kotwāl* Noor Muhammad Khan Mirza arrived on the spot. Early in the morning of July 12 the *Kotwal* was able to arrest the Guru and his companions with the help of the local Ranghars and a posse of additional police called in to meet the resistance of the Jats of the village who had come out to oppose the arrest. (Kesar Singh, *Bansāvali Nāmā*, the *Parkh*, pp. 88-90; Sarup Singh, *Gurū kīan Sākhīān*, No. 25, 26; *Bhatt Vahī*, Talauda, Jind; Irvine, *Later Mughals*, i, 79.) Muhammad Ahsan Ijaad says in his *Farrukh Siyar Nāmā*, *Fragment*, that the Guru was then proceeding "to the Ganges to bathe." The mention of the Guru's intention of going to Ganges was, in

all probability, made by some of his companions at the time of his arrest.

Mirza Noor Muhammad Khan is recorded to have sent the Guru to the *faujdārī* headquarters at Sirhind where he seems to have been detained in prison for some three and a half months by *Faujdār* Dilawar Khan waiting for further orders. In addition to the above works and the *Vahī* records mentioning the arrest of Guru at Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar, it is also mentioned by Dr James Burgess in his *The Chronology of Modern India, 1494-1894* (1913), p. 119.

According to Sarup Singh's *Garū Kian Sākhian* (*Sākhī* No. 26), Guru Tegh Bahadur was kept in Sirhind for over three months and was despatched to Delhi in an iron cage on receipt of a *parwānā* from the Imperial headquarters. He arrived there on Maghar *Vadī* 13, 1732 Bikrami, November 5, 1675.

The Emperor's nobles and the grand *Qāzī* at Delhi did their best to persuade the Guru to be converted to Islam and finding him unwilling tortured him for five days, from November 6 to 10 to coerce him to agree their proposal. But, nothing could shake him 'to abjure his faith or perjure his soul to preserve his muddy vesture of decay.' To do their worst, the royal *Amīrs* and the Qazi resorted to the cruelest and the most inhuman ways. On Maghar *Sudī* 5, 1722 Bk., November 11, 1675, they killed his three companions before his very eyes. *Bhāī* Mati Das was sawn in twain, Dayal Das was boiled to death in a cauldron of hot water, and the third Sati Das was roasted alive with cotton wrapped around his body. And ultimately, in pursuance of the second order received from the Emperor, the Guru himself was executed in public in the Chandi Chowk of Delhi where now stands the Sisganj Gurdwara.

The picture of Guru Tegh Bahadur that thus emerges out in the objective historical setting, given above, on the basis of reliable documentary evidence of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh writers, is that of a true martyr in the cause of *dharma* and the freedom of conscience and conviction. And, there is no doubt that the entire responsibility for his martyrdom lies on the head of Emperor Aurangzeb under whose order the Guru was arrested and imprisoned by the functionaries of the Lahore government and was ultimately executed by the Imperial *Amīrs* at Delhi. Rightly has Guru Gobind Singh referred to it in the *Bachittar Nātak*, saying :

For *dharma*, justice and righteousness, did he perform this feat.

He gave his head, but not his conviction.

Having broken the potsherd (of his body) on the head of the Emperor of Delhi, he left for the abode of the Lord. (Sec. V, 14-15.)

## Important Dates Relating to Sikh Gurus

### **Guru Nanak Dev**

*Father* : Kalyan Das (Mehta Kalu); *Mother* : Tripta;

*Born at* : Talwandi Rai Bhoie 'Nankana Sahib' (Pakistan); *On* : Vaisakh Sudi 3/4, 1526; Vaisakh 20, 1526\*; April 15, 1469 (Saturday); Shawwal 2, 873;

*Wife* : Sulakhani; *Sons* : Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das;

*Age* : 70 years 5 months and 3 days;

*Died at* : Kartarpur (Pakistan); *On* : Asu Vadi 10, 1596; Asu 22, 1596; September 22, 1539 (Monday); Jamadi-ul-Awwal 9, 946;

*Reigning Kings* : Bahlol, Sikandar, Ibrahim Lodhi; Babur and Humayun;

*Hymns* : 947 in 19 Rags.

### **Guru Angad Dev**

*Father* : Pheru Mal; *Mother* : Daya Kaur;

*Born at* : Matte di Sarai (Ferozepur); *On* : Vaisakh Vadi 1, 1561; Vaisakh 5, 1561; March 31, 1504 (Sunday); Shawwal 14, 909;

*Wife* : Khivi; *Sons* : Dasu, Datu; *Daughters* : Amro and Anokhi;

*Date of Accession* : Har Vadi 13, 1596; Har 17, 1596; June 14, 1539 (Saturday); Muharram 27, 946;

*Age on Accession* : 35 years 2 months and 12 days;

*Period of Guruship* : 12 years 9 months and 17 days;

*Age* : 47 years 11 months and 29 days;

*Died at* : Khadoor Sahib (Amritsar); *On* : Chet Sudi 4, 1609; Vaisakh 3, 1609; March 29, 1552 (Tuesday); Rabi-ul-Akhir 3, 959;

*Reigning Kings* : Humayun, Sher Shah and Islam Shah Suri;

*Hymns* : 63 sloks.

### **Guru Amar Das**

*Father* : Tej Bhan; *Mother* : Sulakhni (Lachhmi);

*Born at* : Basarke (Amritsar); *On* : Vaisakh Vadi 14, 1536; Jeth 8, 1536; May 5, 1479 (Wednesday); Safar 12, 884;

*Wife* : Ramo; *Sons* : Mohan, Mohri; *Daughters* : Dani and Bhani;

*Date of Accession* : Chet Sudi 4, 1609; Vaisakh 3, 1609; March 29, 1552 (Tuesday); Rabi-ul-Akhir 3, 959;

\* In some of the later works, the date of Guru Nanak's birth is mentioned as Katik Puranmasi, 1526 Bikrami.

*Age on Accession* : 72 years 10 months and 24 days;

*Period of Guruship* : 22 years 4 months and 30 days;

*Age* : 95 years 3 months and 23 days

*Died at* : Goindwal (Amritsar); *On* : Bhadon Sudi 15, 1631; Asu 1, 1631; September 1, 1574 (Wednesday); Jamadi-ul-Awwal 14, 982;

*Reigning Kings* : Firoz Shah, Mohammad Adil Shah, Humayun and Akbar;

*Hymns* : 869 in 17 Rags.

#### **Guru Ram Dass**

*Father* : Har Das; *Mother* : Daya Kaur;

*Born at* : Choona Mandi (Lahore); *On* : Katik Vadi 2, 1591; Asu 25, 1591; September 24, 1534 (Thursday); Rabi-ul-Awwal 15, 941;

*Wife* : Bhani; *Sons* : Prithi Chand, Maha Dev and Arjan Dev;

*Date of Accession* : Bhadon Sudi 15 (Puranmasi), 1631; Asu 1, 1631; September 1, 1574 (Wednesday); Jamadi-ul-Awwal 14, 982;

*Age on Accession* : 39 years 11 months and 7 days;

*Period of Guruship* : 7 years;

*Age* : 46 years 11 months and 7 days;

*Died at* : Goindwal (Amritsar); *On* : Bhadon Sudi 3, 1638; Asu 2, 1638; September 1, 1581 (Friday); Shaban 2, 989;

*Reigning King* : Akbar;

*Hymns* : 638 sloks and Chhands.

#### **Guru Arjan Dev**

*Father* : Guru Ram Das; *Mother* : Bhani;

*Born at* : Goindwal (Amritsar); *On* : Vaisakh Vadi 7, 1620; Vaisakh 19, 1620; April 15, 1563 (Thursday); Shaban 21, 970;

*Wife* : Ganga; *Son* : Hargobind;

*Date of Accession* : Bhadon Sudi 3, 1638; Asu 2, 1638; September 1, 1581; (Friday); Shaban 2, 989;

*Age on Accession* : 18 years 4 months and 14 days;

*Period of Guruship* : 24 years 9 months;

*Age* : 43 years 1 month and 15 days;

*Died at* : Lahore; *On* : Jeth Sudi 4, 1663; Har 1, 1663; May 30, 1606 (Friday); Safar 2, 1015;

*Reigning Kings* : Akbar, Jahangir;

*Hymns* : 2312 in 30 Rags.

#### **Guru Hargobind**

*Father* : Guru Arjan Dev; *Mother* : Ganga;

*Born at* : Guru ki Wadali (Amritsar); *On* : Har Vadi 6/7, 1652; Har 21,



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1652 ; June 19, 1595 (Thursday); Shawwal 21, 1003;  
*Wife* : Damodari, Nanaki and Maha Devi; *Sons* : Gurditta, Suraj Mal;  
Ani Rai, Atal Rai, Tegh Bahadur, *Daughter* : Veero;  
*Date of Accession* : Jeth Vadi 14, 1663; Jeth 28, 1663; May 25, 1606  
(Sunday); Moharram 27, 1015;  
*Age on Accession* : 10 years 10 months and 8 days;  
*Period of Guruship* : 37 years 10 months and 7 days;  
*Age* : 48 years 8 months and 15 days;  
*Died at* : Kiratpur Sahib; *On* : Chet Sudi 5, 1701; Chet 6, 1701; March  
3, 1644 (Sunday); Moharram 4, 1054;  
*Reigning Kings* : Jahangir, Shahjahan.

#### **Guru Har Rai**

*Father* : Gurditta; *Mother* : Nihal Kaur;  
*Born at* : Kiratpur Sahib (Ropar); *On* : Magh Sudi 13, 1686; Magh 19,  
1686; January 16, 1630 (Saturday); Jamadi-ul-Akhir 11, 1039;  
*Wife* : Ram Kaur and Krishan Kaur; *Sons* : Ram Rai and Har Krishan;  
*Date of Accession* : Chet Sudi 10, 1701; Chet 11, 1701; March 8, 1644;  
Moharram 9, 1054 ;  
*Age on Accession* : 14 years 2 months and 22 days ;  
*Period of Guruship* : 17 years 5 month and 18 days;  
*Age* : 31 years 8 months and 10 days;  
*Died at* : Kiratpur Sahib (Ropar); *On* : Katik Vadi 9, 1718; Katik 5,  
1718; October 6, 1661 (Sunday); Safar 21, 1072;  
*Reigning Kings* : Shahjahan, Aurangzeb.

#### **Guru Har Krishan**

*Father* : Guru Har Rai; *Mother* : Krishan Kaur;  
*Born at* : Kiratpur Sahib (Ropar); *On* : Sawan Vadi 10, 1713; Sawan 8,  
1713; July 7, 1656 (Monday); Ramzan 25, 1066;  
*Date of Accession* : Katik Vadi 10, 1718; Katik 6, 1718; October 7, 1661;  
(Monday); Safar 22, 1072;  
*Age on Accession* : 5 years and 3 months;  
*Period of Guruship* : 2 years 5 Months and 26 days;  
*Age* : 7 years 8 months and 26 days;  
*Died at* : Delhi; *On* : Chet Sudi 14, 1721; Vaisakh 3, 1722; March 30,  
1664 (Wednesday); Ramzan 13, 1074;  
*Reigning King* : Aurangzeb.

#### **Guru Tegh Bahadur**

*Father* : Guru Hargobind; *Mother* : Nanaki;  
*Born at* : Amritsar; *On* : Vaisakh Vadi 5, 1678; Vaisakh 5, 1678; April

1, 1621 (Sunday); Jamadi-ul-Awwal 19, 1030;  
*Wife* : Gujri; *Son* : Gobind Singh;  
*Date of Accession* : Chet Sudi 14, 1722; Chet 23, 1722; March 20, 1665  
 (Monday); Ramzan 13, 1075;  
*Age on Accession* : 43 years 11 months and 19 days;  
*Period of Guruship* : 10 years 7 months and 18 days;  
*Age* : 54 years 7 months and 7 days;  
*Died at* : Delhi; *On* : Maghar Sudi 5, 1732; Maghar 11, 1732; November  
 11, 1675 (Thursday); Ramzan 3, 1086;  
*Reigning King* : Aurangzeb;  
*Hymns* : 116 Sabads and sloks.

### **Guru Gobind Singh**

*Father* : Guru Tegh Bahadur; *Mother* : Gujri;  
*Born at* : Patna Sahib (Bihar); *On* : Poh Sudi 7, 1723; Poh 23, 1723;  
 December 22, 1666 (Saturday); Rajab 5, 1077;  
*Wife* : Sundari, Ajit Kaur (Jito) and Sahib Kaur; *Sons* : Ajit Singh,  
 Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh;  
*Date of Accession* : Maghar Sudi 5, 1732; Maghar 11, 1732; November  
 11, 1675 (Thursday); Ramzan, 3 1086;  
*Age on Accession* : 8 years 10 months and 19 days;  
*Period of Guruship* : 32 years 10 months and 26 days;  
*Age* : 41 years 9 months and 15 days;  
*Died at* : Nander (Hyderabad); *On* : Katik Sudi 5, 1765; Katik 6, 1765;  
 October 7, 1708 (Thursday) ; Shaban 3, 1120;  
*Hymns* : In the *Dasam Granth*.

The dates of births, deaths., etc., mentioned above, were originally recorded according to the Bikrami Lunar system. The comparative Bikrami and A.D. dates of the Solar system and the Hijri dates have been given by us according to L.D. Swamikannu Pillai's *Indian Ephemeris*.

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## Thoughts on the Study of Indian History

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A historian is sometimes compared, as by Kalhana, the Kashmir historian, to a judge who holds the scales of justice even between two parties. Many medieval Indo-Muslim historians, including Khafi Khan, also realised the necessity of impartial and truthful delineation of history. To Taine a historian is like a surgeon, who plunges a lancet into the past and brings out complete and authentic specimens. Namier holds that the historian is not a photographer who reproduces everything but a painter who discriminates, singles out and stresses on the nature of his subject. A historian is, again, compared to a detective who, to ascertain the events and causes thereof, considers all logically open possibilities, rejects the absurd ones and investigates only the plausible ones, i. e., what men as men could have been or done.

Buckle, who passionately believed in the science of history, had a disparaging opinion about historians. He considered them to be inferior in mental power to scientists. On the other hand Sir Isaiah Berlin holds that one devoid of 'common intelligence can be a physicist of genius but not even a mediocre historian.' The merit of the controversy apart, the historian needs capacities and unique qualifications different from those natural scientists. He should be able to think in general terms, to understand human character, to know of ways of reciprocal reactions (as necessary as knowledge of facts), and to perceive relation of part to whole and qualitative similarities and differences. He needs the capacity of association or integration as distinct from that of dissociation of the scientist. This brings us to the implications of the concept of scientific and objective history.

One of the cherished objects of our Congress is the writing of a Comprehensive History of India on scientific and objective lines, marked by truth and nothing but the truth. Indian historiography imbibed this 19th century principle of European historiography from Jadunath Sarkar, Rajwade and others. Recently, however, the concepts and methods of historiography, the structure of historical explanations, objectivity of history, etc., are under investigation in the western world. Happily not all agree with those who emphasize the limitations of scientific history and deny its objectivity. We may, therefore, review some of these trends.

Since the 17th century history had to bear the stigma of Cartesian condemnation as being unworthy of serious study. It was in the 19th century that the concept of scientific history started, and history was transformed and transferred from an amateurish art into a professional, powerful and illuminating discipline, akin to natural sciences with very exacting standards, divorced from literature and personal passion or preference. Precision, rigorous observation and reasoning, objectivity in explanation of human action, statement of unqualified truth, irrespective of consequences, were preached by the proponents of scientific history in Europe; Renan, Taine, Monod, Ranke and others. The Cambridge controversy (J. B. Bury vs. G. M. Trevelyan, 1903) has not yet died down. It is still very much alive. Bury's classic remark 'History is a science, no less and no more', implied (i) first, the definitive truths about the past, discovered by historians, through advanced techniques, could have scientific status, i. e., history is on the way to be a science; (ii) second, their task finishes with finding the truth, and they need not give anything more. But definitive *truths* and definitive *truth* are not the same. The grand-nephew of Macaulay agreed that history could be scientific in establishing basic facts, but referred to its wider aspects and urged that historians should *explain* and *interpret* them; for the rational reader seeks in history a balanced assessment of his own age, not just a means to satisfy idle curiosity. But explanation and interpretation are different. Trevelyan's critics aver that the historian does an exacting, subtle and even esoteric job with mounting detail but does not tell the saga of human history to the common man. To Trevor-Roper (*History, Professional and Lay*, 1958), however, history is a humane discipline, hardly a science.

It is undeniable that there are differences between history and natural sciences,—in method, aim, and idea of importance. Science concentrates on similarities, history on differences. Science establishes general laws or types and believes in them. In the 19th century it was expected that history would be a nomothetic science in which factual materials could be ordered under a system of laws and rules, and that march of events or patterns of growth could be systematised as a series of cause and effect. But this positivist optimism was still born. No general laws could be formulated about the behaviour of men, as they are dynamic and their feelings, thoughts and ideas mutually react. So history could not be wholly deductive. It could not also be inductive as men are not amenable to large-scale experiments. Unlike natural science history cannot predict. It is, of course, capable of retrodiction but this is not very satisfactory. Unlike definite deductive scheme of natural sciences, e.g., electron, proton, chro-

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mosome, etc., historical generalizations, being skillful applications of common sense, are relatively general, vague, inaccurate and repetitive at times. This applies equally to vast all-embracing schematicism of Hegel, Spengler, Toynbee and others, as well as to specialized studies on selected, isolated aspects of human endeavour,—history of social activity, arts crafts, technology or science. Any attempt to integrate such strands in a 'total' picture of human experience by means of a *single* factor, e. g., climate (Buckle), environment, moment and race (Taine), base and super-structure and class struggle (Marx) leads to distortions or overstatements.

Writers like Acton and Vinogradoff have spoken of the lessons of history. This springs from the old belief in uniformity of all history, and the search for a general law of historical evolution. But this is a superficial view. True, some generalised hypotheses are necessary to understand and interpret historic sequences. But their applicability is essentially limited owing to differences in social and political situations, in industrial patterns and to the variable dynamic human behaviour. The truly novel element in history may be explained but cannot be predicted. Though knowledge of the past helps search for relevant problems and so is not wholly useless, it will not supply solutions and enable the present generation to shape its future.

General history, sometimes denigrated as a fraud, is the richest of all human studies—a rich brew of diverse constituents,—historical, social, economic, religious, intellectual, etc. (as in French Revolution). By a process of selection, adjustment and exercise of historical judgment, unfamiliar and mysterious to scientists, deductive or inductive, the historian searches for coherence and unity among 'loose object of sense, imagination and intelligence,' arrives at historical explanations, seeks to weave a series of patterns and throws a mental projection to the past, with all useful aids from all sciences, all theories and all knowledge. He neither predicts nor extrapolates. Men are treated not as mere spatial organisms or pawns on a chess-board but as volitional, active human beings, mutually inter-communicating and interacting. Such explanations, arrangements of discovered facts, would be unsatisfactory and incomplete, if the concepts or categories of the pattern relate to minor, fleeting or unfamiliar fields of experience; and satisfactory and well-grounded, if the concepts are widely applicable, permanent familiar and common to many men and many civilizations ; and profound, fundamental and revolutionary (e.g., Ibn Khaldun, Vico, Kant, Marx, Freud), if the explanations reveal basic categories of universal significance, applicable to all fields of human activity.

The objectivity of history has been assailed on several counts. But it all depends on the standard adopted. Even admitting that history may not be as objective as natural sciences, still it may claim to be objective if the standard is slightly relaxed (J. A. Passmore). As history cannot deduce its content from self-evident axioms, its claim to objectivity is denied according to the Cartesian (or mathematico-deductive) criterion. True, the Hegelian conception of History as the gradual revelation of a plan of an Idea might satisfy the above criterion, but Hegel himself warns : 'History itself must be taken as it is ; we have to proceed historically, empirically... only the study of world history can show that it has proceeded rationally.' But did not Ranke deduce his history, acclaimed as objective, from the archives of Venice ? According to Mach's criterion, objectivity belongs to only current data. Past events cannot be data and so history cannot be objective. The scientist can always penetrate from recorded facts to the facts themselves. The historian cannot penetrate beyond the testimony to the past events. But by setting one testimony against another he can claim to achieve objectivity. Again, History, relying on testimony, is not a direct examination of the world. Eyewitness's accounts, sometimes preferred, are often suspect. The scientist relies on testimony recorded by a trained observer. The historian relies on chronicles; sometimes there are no sources except chronicles or even a single chronicle and the chronicles may have an axe to grind. Popper has shown (*The Open Society*) that the so-called "sources" of history only record such facts as appeared sufficiently interesting to record, so that sources will contain only facts that fit in with a pre-conceived theory. True, Barani was dissatisfied with Muhammad Tughlaq and Badaoni with Akbar. Elliot denounced Muslim rule to extol British rule. The historian, however, need not depend on partisan propaganda. He has other means to check such accounts. He can also trace other sources, archaeological, accounts of foreign travellers, literature, hagiological literature (of medieval saints), administrative manuals, lists of tax collections, etc. He also applies the test of plausability.

The argument that scientific statements mean 'the same' for all but historical statements do not, can never entitle one to dismiss the latter as subjective for it makes objectivity vacuous. Again, an enquiry is said to be objective only if it keeps to 'atomic facts' and if it does not select from its own material. The historian discovers links and weaves a coherent pattern or history out of 'an incoherent mass of minute facts, with detail knowledge reduced as it were to a powder' (Langlois and Seignobos). Namier says (*Avenues of History*) that the historian is a painter and not

a photographer, with his own (arbitrary) sense or vision of importance of facts. He cannot discuss everything. So history is necessarily and irredeemably subjective and individual in selection and reconstruction. The complaint is as old as Descartes (*Discourse on Method*, Part I). But the criterion is queer, for even some scientific form of enquiry is selective. In fact selection is determined by the nature of the problem and selectivity may lead to objectivity.

Popper further argued that whereas scientific hypotheses are applicable to all situations, historical hypotheses are essentially *ad hoc* and so history cannot decide between conflicting hypotheses. Passmore regards it as an exaggeration. The utmost that can be said against history is that *sometimes* there is no known way of deciding between conflicting hypotheses. But it is not peculiar to history.

Perhaps the hardest criterion applied against the objectivity of history is that its conclusions are not universally applicable. True, unanimity is not to be found but if the test of objectivity is that there are regular ways of settling issues and knowing the occurrences the objectivity of history cannot be doubted.

The most popular of all grounds to deny it is that historical works, all claiming to be scientific and based on facts, differ from one another. Such differences are due to causes other than lack of objectivity. One reason of rewriting history books in every generation may be discovery of new facts or interest in new aspects of past events, and so all history is contemporary history.

It will be readily agreed that History is scientific as it has reliable, recognised methods, scientific techniques to decide what occurred and establish facts. But it is not science, implying search for general laws or theories. The historian is as dedicated, as ruthless and as earnest a seeker of exactness as a physicist. He carries on microscopic research in patient drudgery but with the faith that largest meticulous collection of the most minute facts will 'tell in the end.' But we have travelled far from Bury. History is now recognised to be not merely a factual discovery, a factual amalgam or a mere recitation of facts. It is description cum explanation, assessment and interpretation.

The line between fact and interpretation is overlapping and shifting. The interpretation should answer how the world looked to others. A scientist, a mathematician or an economist has no need to probe the mind of Newton, Euclid or Adam Smith or of the masses. But the historian has to be a psychologist, sympathetic and imaginative at the same time and has constantly to ask how the events appeared to the participants,—Alex-

ander and Asoka, Akbar, Aurangzeb, Dalhousie, Curzon, Gandhi, to mention a few—to study their minds and their psychology which affected the course of events. 'Historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying' (Collingwood), History thus resurrects or reconstructs the 'vanished threads' of the past not only in totality but also in perspective. Here the personality of the historian assumes a supreme importance. As a human being he selects his events according to his concept and categories, preoccupations and to his criteria of importance. The same material will thus appear different according to the value judgments or the view point of the writer. Historical truth is not truth irrespective of persons. It is different from scientific truth. This does not mean that there is no truth in history. In fact Benedetto Croce, in his classic *History as the Story of Liberty*, strongly holds that 'historical writing proper is dedicated to truth. The concept of truth about the past is more difficult than is realised. History is more complex than is imagined. It is neither wholly literature nor wholly science. Imbibing some features of both, it is also akin to art.

We, students of social science, should be on our guard against some methodological dangers to which Alexander Gerschenkron, reputed to be 'the doyen of economic history' in U.S.A. has drawn our attention. There is, *first* of all, an external danger. It is well known that totalitarian states are notorious for their wide and pervasive 'enservment' of social sciences. But such a risk exists also in other states, western as well as eastern. 'Tendencious' or party-historiography corrupts and destroys historical truth (Croce).

*Secondly*, there is also an internal danger, the subordination of sciences to value judgments. Admitting that these play peculiar role, it is apprehended that modern views about these are confused and obscure the dangers threatening our disciplines. Social phenomenon can be understood in the light of men's motivations. Purposive human action is naturally described as evaluative action. Social studies are described as studies in human values or *value judgments*. Research subjects are selected and concepts are formed according to value orientation, implying selective viewpoints of the material. As in problems of public policy both the ends and the means have values attached, the scholar becomes subservient to some preconceived opinion (cf. Gunnar Myrdal's writings edited by Paul Streeten, *Value in Social Theory: A Selection of Essays on Methodology*, 1958; and Carl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*). The bitter pill of 'unobjective scholarship' is sought to be sweetened by hasty and ill-conceived generalizations that the value judgments are 'inevitable' as well as 'beneficial.'



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(Arthur Smithies in *Economics and Public Policy*, 1954.)

Thirdly, historians with ingrained belief in general propositions become at times 'prisoners of their theories,' and yoke their facts to a particular theory. There is a growing tendency in some quarters to interpret Indian history in the light of certain preconceived theories. All interpretations are welcome, as expressions of the intellect. But a 'doctrinaire historian' is a term of abuse, which perhaps no historian will like to be hurded against him. Such theories which taken their birth outside India may undeniably possess some elements of strength, when based on facts. But in our country we do not yet even know all facts on a particular subject. To attempt to explain history on the basis of generalizations unsupported by facts will, therefore, be unscientific and unhistorical. It will be like putting the cart before the horse. Scientific objectivity will be safeguarded only if, as Karl Popper urges (*The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957), the scholars as a body remain adamant in their 'institutional anchored unwillingness' to brook any lapse from objective scholarship, and endeavour their best to separate their work from their own private predilections and those of others. As Bertrand Russell urges : 'It is advantageous to have beliefs which are in accordance with facts.' An ounce of fact may, indeed, be worth more than a pound of theory, even though facts often speak with conflicting voices.

What is necessary, therefore, is to get to the rock-bottom base of facts. 'The last word of the historian is not some firm general statement : it is a detailed piece of research' (Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*). Numerous are the sources or raw materials of history which await the patient search and the magic touch of the inquisitive, discerning and devoted scholar to yield their secrets. From pre-history to modern times, archaeology to archives, it is a long way which no single scholar, however tenacious, can ever hope to traverse. Jadunath Sarkar could cover only 150 years of India's political history after herculean and meticulous effort of 57 years. Without trying to be exhaustive I would only like to refer to a few samples of information relating to only the medieval period, my special field of study.

### **Persian :**

Knowledge of Persian is an indispensable pre-requisite of any researcher in medieval India. Generally speaking scholars have laid chronicles, official and non-official, letters, court bulletins, biographical works, foreign travellers' accounts, and literature in the widest sense of the term under contribution. But only a few like late Professor Muhammad Habib, Abdur Rashid, Sayyid Hasan Askari and K.A. Nizami have studied the *malfuzat* and *maktubat* literature of Pirs, Sufis, Auliyas,

other saint and *faqirs*. Yet the need of studying this vast mystic literature and incorporating its gifts in historical research cannot be gainsaid.

It gives "a glimpse of the medieval society ... the moods and tensions of the common man, the inner yearning of his soul, the religious thought at its higher and lower levels, the popular customs and manners and the problems of the people. There is no other type of literature through which we can feel the pulse of the medieval public ... this literature acts as a corrective to the wrong impressions created by the contemporary political chronicles ... Besides extremely valuable biographical details about leaders of ideas and religion, we get in this literature interesting information about the religion, ideas and institutions, superstitions and attitudes of the period. How the common man lived and thought? What were his reactions to different situations of medieval life? If any literature of medieval India give us any idea about these problems, it is certainly the mystic literature of the period." I have myself found rare gems of economic import relating to Medieval Bihar in such literature.

Then there are *bayaz* or scrap books. The *bayaz* of Mulla Taqiya, also known as M. T. Shustari, Taqiuddin or Taqi Muhammad, a sixteenth century historian, poet and traveller, and follower of *Din-i-Ilahi*, commissioned by Akbar to write a *Shahnama*, entitled Muwarrikh Khan by Jahangir (1608), and referred to by Nizamuddin Bakshi and Badayuni, throws much new light on political history and historical geography. His methodology seems remarkable for that age. While serving Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan he travelled from Jaunpur to Bengal. The account of his travels, containing references to Bengal and Bihar affairs in the time of Akbar was based on his personal information, the books in the library of Gaur and the private papers of Nishat Khan, son of a Bihar *jagirdar*, Hashim Khan. Abul Hasan, a disciple of the Mulla, had a copy of this account prepared in A.H. 1023. It was discovered by Ilyas Rahmani of Darbhanga and long extracts were published in an Urdu monthly journal of Patna, *Maasir*, in May-June, 1949 (Q. Ahmad, *Corpus of Bihar Inscriptions*).

Then, again, wholly new light is thrown on military art in medieval India by works like *Adab u'l Harb wa Shuja'at* or *Adab ul Muluk wa Kifayat ul Mamluk* by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, a contemporary of Iltutmish in 13th century; the *Haft Anjuman*, constituting in part the military despatches of Mirza Rajah Jai Singh I of Amber in the 17th century; and the *Jangnamah* of Qazi Nur Muhammad in the 18th. Such works enable us not only to know the medieval Indian art of war but also to correct the views of modern military experts like General Montgomery and eminent

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scholars like K.M. Panikkar that the idea of united command was conspicuous by its absence in Indian armies. Whatever might have been the actual deficiencies of Indian field armies, the concept was fully known to Indian generals and theorists. Jai Singh I says (*Haft Anjuman*, Benares MS., f. 123 a., Sarkar Collection, National Library) : 'in war there ought to be only one chief, or the work will be mismanaged.'

##### **Rajasthani :**

Rajasthani sources, the largest single centralised collection of which is now in the State Archives of Bikaner, constitute a veritable ocean of source materials, now being charted by the department. As I walked through its vaults I recalled the words of Robert Clive as he moved through the vaults of the Murshidabad palace after Plassey. He expressed surprise at his own 'moderation.' I bewailed my linguistic ignorance. Working here I discovered a unique gem of information that even in the time of Aurangzeb the common people (*panch*) of village Chatsu near Amber protested against the destruction of temples by his officials, about which we know next to nothing (*Bengal Past and Present*, vol. xciv. pt. ii, July-Dec., 1975). The deciphering and understanding of a letter of one foolscap page may at times take more than a day, even with expert help.

##### **Bengali :**

Contemporary literature in various regional languages of India constitutes a rich quarry of research. More than fifty years ago Moreland had recognised the value of this source in writing the economic history of Mughal India but could not use it. But literature is a positive source for other aspects of Indian history as well, social, religious and even political life. Here I am referring to a news item published in the Bengali daily, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, dated 26 Kartik, 1383 B.S., i.e., 12 November, 1976. A reference library with about 15,000 volumes relating to medieval Vaishnavism has been traced in the Radha-damodarji temple at Brindaban, founded by Jiva Goswami (d. 1604), nephew of Rup and Sanatan. It also contains mss. in Sanskrit, Braja bhasa, Oriya and Gujrati. Credit for this discovery goes to Dr Ramadas Gupta, Professor of Hindi in London University (1968-74). And now an international Brindaban Research Institute has been established in 1974 with the cooperation of Sir Cyril Philips and G.C. Wright at London and Dr Tarapada Mukherji, Professor of Bengali in the University of London. It seems to me that this discovery will be as important for medieval religion and culture and especially Gaudiya Vaishnavism as the discovery of mss. in the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas in Central Asia for Buddhism and ancient Indian culture.

##### **Portuguese :**

The value of Portuguese records, again, cannot be minimised. These

are mostly available in Europe. But the archives at Panjim-Goa contain, among other things, several series of Portuguese source materials which throw light on the history of India. But not many are familiar with the language. I worked here for some time by taking assistance from Sri Gajanan Ghanthkar, an Assistant Director at Panjim and his staff. I give some examples of strikingly original information. The letters of the Portuguese viceroy, Antonio de Mello de Castro dated 31 March, 1665, to Jai Singh and Manucci apparently struck a pro-Mughal and anti-Shivaji note. But that the viceroy was insincere is clear from his letter to the Chief Captain of the Northern territory (Ignacio Sarmento de Carvalho) dated 18 April, 1665. "The affairs of the Mughals which give so much anxiety on account of the State in which we find them, even though at present they do not show much danger, are, however, worthy of great consideration and thus it is meet we deal with them with great prudence, so that we neither give them occasion to break with us, nor should we show them that we doubt them : and, because all their complaint is born of their imagination that we show favour to Shivaji, you should order that nothing should be done from which they could have this suspicion. However, if, without this risk, you could secretly give any aid with munitions and foodstuffs to Shivaji you should do it for money because it is not desirable that if he is driven from his lands, the Mughal should remain the lord of them. But this should be done with such great caution that never should he be able to guess, much less verify it. While Shivaji was thinking of retiring to Chaul in case he was worsted by Jai Singh, the Portuguese government tried to persuade him to move to Goa instead, as Goa would be safer for Shivaji than Chaul, and as his taking shelter in the northern place, nearer to Mughal territory, was likely to complicate Portuguese-Mughal relations. Again we also get the completely new and astounding news that Shivaji surrendered to Jai Singh at Purandar because of 'lack of provisions'; the Portuguese having, at Jai Singh's request, taken all the transport ships of Shivaji, preventing the provisioning of the Maratha forts.

**Russian :**

Permit me, to give an idea of the wealth of information treasured in the vaults of the Archives in U.S.S.R., which I derived from an English abstract of some Russian documents of 18th century (1706-1802). These throw wholly new light on the commercial and financial activities of at least 27 Indian merchants, Hindu and Muslim, as well as on Russian trade relations with India, Persia and Central Asian Khanates. The information is revealing and interesting, though many things require to

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be pursued further and explained. Some of the Indian merchants were active in Russia for a fairly long period, viz., Sukhanand for 25 years (1735-60) and his nephew Magandas for 38 years (1760-98); Nebagu (? Nabhaji) for 32 years (1730-62); Ambu Ram for 17 years (1706-23); Kasiram (or ? Kansiram) for 13 years (1742-55); Shantu for 4 years (1745-9), besides Danishmand Khan (1706), Suvan (? Subhan, 1706) and others. Astrakhan was a very busy meeting place of merchants of different countries who were registered, accommodated in particular quarters, and even enjoyed Russian citizenship. Kasiram and his friends prayed for the right of free trade in all cities and towns of Russia for all Indians (1750).

Indian merchants displayed a remarkable spirit of enterprise and mobility, thus disproving a common charge of their lacking these qualities. Not only did they move from place to place from Astrakhan to Moscow and vice versa, and from Moscow to Petersburg, some even petitioned Tsar Peter I (1723) for permission to travel through Russian territory to European countries and China. Further, they carried on trade operations with the Central Asian Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara. Indian and Armenian merchants in Persia intended to move to Astrakhan for trade (1723). Magandas sought the permission of the civilian governor at Astrakhan to ship goods for sale in Persia (1798).

One is amazed at the widespread and significant nature of the activities of the Indian merchants including property transactions, viz., sale of land (1708), implying even earlier ownership; purchase of farm buildings (in 1740, 1741, 1751); purchase and sale of war prisoners (1738); sale of Indian gold pieces (1742), etc. There are, again, copious references to loans given by Indians to Russians and to trading contracts between them in Astrakhan towns and villages. The former hired local workmen and engaged local residents as their salesmen. Naturally at times legal complications cropped up and occasional references to Russian justice show that it was quick and fair. In one case the Senate, to which the Indian complainant referred against the decision of the magistrate's court, asked the latter to reconsider (1756). Perhaps the Indian, Armenian, Tartar and Russian creditors charged high rates of interest and usury was prohibited in 1744. We have reference to sale of Indian printed cloth in Holland (1727) as well as sale of precious stones (1769). But by 1778 restrictions were sought to be imposed by limiting the period of residence of the Indians.

Some Indians embraced Christianity and adopted new names under report to Government. Narotam (? Narottam) embraced Greek orthodox

faith (1726), while P. Fyodorov requested delivery of property of late Rugnath (? Raghunath or Ranganath), and the matter was referred by the Senate to Empress Anna Ivanovna (1734).

The Indian merchants were not only concerned with material pursuits but they had some public benefactions to their credit (1769).

During the 18th century Tsarist Russia sought to develop Russia's foreign trade with different countries, particularly direct trade connection with China and India (1714). Tsar Peter I ordered an overland mission to India under Lieutenant (Poruchik) A. I. Kozhins (Feb.-Nov., 1716) through Persia. On the precedent of letters previously sent by the Tsars to 'Indian Padshahs', the Tsar wrote to 'Shah Alam, the Mughal Padshah' (May 1716) on the information supplied by 'the Indian Raja Ram Sidorov' (which, however, turned out to be wrong). The Tsar was also eager to sign a trade agreement with India (Dec. 1723).

Of the various routes considered for direct Russo-Indic trade we read of :

(i) via Central Asian Khanates (1718-25, 1727, 1751). Empress Anna Ivanovna was interested in forming a company to trade with India and development of trade with the Central Asian Khanates, India and China (1735-36);

(ii) the North Sea route for trade with China, Japan, India and America (1732). An Indian merchant (Marwari) gave evidence with regard to India (1735). The Arctic and Pacific Ocean route was also considered in 1763;

(iii) via Persia (1715).

Two treaties were made with Persia, one in 1729 for security of Russian merchants going to India, and the other in 1732 for free trade and security in Persia. There was a talk of forming a company for trade with Persia (1752);

(iv) through Siberia (1764);

(v) sending Russian naval officers to India on English ships (1763).

There were as many as seven proposals to establish a company in Russia for trade with India,—respectively submitted by an Englishman to Empress Anna Ivanovna (1740); by a Dutchman to the Board of trade (1762-3); (recommended) by a member of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs (1783); by the Vice-Governor of Astrakhan (1792); by an Englishman in 1794; by a French Marshall proposing the cession of a base on Madagascar island to Russia during the Revolutionary war (1796); and by a Russian with the support of the Imam of Oman (1799).

On the basis of information about the value of goods imported and

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exported by Indian merchants through Astrakhan customs 1790-9, the Board of Trade suggested measures for extension of trade with India, Khiva and Bokhara (1800). The possibility of establishing a permanent trade connection with India was also discussed (1801).

Political, economic, social and intellectual history all concur and intersect at the focal point of ideology of social movements. But its path is beset with numerous difficulties. Long before Montesquieu and Buckle, the Moroccan writer Ibn Khaldun of 14th century had stressed the importance of the socio-economic environment in studying history. But his words of wisdom were wasted on the Indo-Moslem historians of the medieval period, who wrote of kings and ministers, of great men, to the exclusion of social forces in the life of the people. Following the lead of the early Indo-British historians, who themselves followed the line of least resistance in drawing upon the ready-made history of the medieval Indo-Muslim chroniclers, Indian historians too, at first concentrated on political and military to the exclusion of socio-cultural aspects. Since Marx and towards the close of the 19th century the emphasis shifted to socio economic history in Europe, and the common man has been installed in place of the great men on the pedestal of history, not so much because of economic determinism as of changed estimation of the former. In India, however, only the last fifty years or so have witnessed a major change in the direction and methodology (form, technique and scope) of historiography, viz., an increasing interest in socio-economic, religious and cultural history. The *modus operandi* has been to study what is called 'social history' during a definite period or covering a particular region, dwelling on different features of social life, dress, food, manners and customs, festivals, amusements and recreations, position of women, system of education, etc.,—on the basis of cumulative evidence of chronicles, literature, foreign travellers' accounts archaeological evidence, inscriptions, coins, art, government reports, census reports, newspapers, etc., as required. While the picture thus portrayed in numerous books on the subject is detailed and valuable, as giving a cross-section of social life, sometimes these hardly give any idea of the intricacies of the social life or of its dynamic character. Perhaps this may be due to the synchronic manner of treating a particular period in isolation from the preceding or succeeding periods. In other words, society is portrayed as being essentially static, rather than dynamic. I humbly submit that for proper understanding of the dynamic of social change, a diachronic enquiry, combined with an inter-disciplinary approach, by taking help of sociology, anthropology and allied sciences, is desirable.

Schopenhauer's remark that 'nothing essential ever changes except names and years' cannot very well be applicable to history. History dies in the absence of change. Cohen (*Modern Social Theory*, 1968) pithily says; 'No society is persistent without change, nor changing without being persistent.' The meaning of the allied concepts of historical continuity and discontinuity is, however, blurred. There is, again, the concept of the gradualness of all change. Without discussing its various aspects it may be stated that continuity is a 'tool forged by the historian' rather than something inherent in the historical process itself. It is the historian who establishes the continuity of events through the ages and determines how far back the causal chain is to be traced.

Apart from the theories of social change which are legion, we have to consider the items, manner, rate, causation and direction of change. As regards the relative importance of individuals and of social forces, on which opinions vary, it may generally be admitted that their influence is equally great. In fact the role of 'charismatic' leaders in moulding and directing social forces, to use Max Weber's terminology, like the Buddha, Chaitanya, Dayanand, Asoka, Akbar and Gandhi, can never be denied. Similarly a culture or an age can be understood better by the detailed study of the lives of representative individuals, families or groups, than any amount of theory. When biographical studies are denigrated it becomes necessary to emphasize this point.

Among the factors and instruments of social change in India usually demography, technology, economy, culture, legislation and planning are mentioned. We have to consider it as a phenomenon of history.

India is a geographic and historic entity. Indian civilization has a cultural unity, encompassing all diversities within. Underneath the uniform social order with its shared beliefs and values lie diverse regional customs and loyalties, which often drown the sense of wider unity. But change is the essence of history.

Leaving aside the geological changes in bygone ages, Geography has been a potent factor of social and cultural change. The Indus valley civilization in India is said to have flourished and decayed because of geographical factors. The great migrations of peoples during pre-historic and historic times, were dictated, among others, by geographical factors and followed natural geographical routes. The Aryan migrations, the Persian and Macedonian invasions, the Asokan missions, the Saka Kushan-Yuechi movements, the Buddhist opening of Central Asia, Mongolia and China, the Hunic avalanche, the Arab, Mongol, Turkish, Mughal and Afghan invasions, all caused momentous changes in society, religion



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and culture. But the nature of these successive impacts differed from age to age and from people to people. Perhaps a comparative study of such changes would yield rich academic dividends. Within the geographical limits of India, again, alternate waves of imperialistic expansions of north and south Indian powers determined, among others, by geographical factors, affected politics and administration, society, economy and culture. A recent study of such a contact and adjustment between the North and South in Indian history by the Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta (1976), illustrates this process through the ages in Indian history.

Besides the natural forces grouped under Geography there are three other factors which lie behind the dynamics of social change. Of these two are constant, the State and Religion, respectively, expressing dominant political needs and the eternal and indestructible metaphysical needs of men. The third is variable, viz., culture. All these three have existed at periods of high civilization, mutually interacting, especially with age-old stratified cultural heritage. There are monumental studies of the Indus valley civilization, the Vedic and Epic ages, of Buddhism and Jainism, the ebb and flow of successive imperialisms, foreign invasions, the medieval theistic reformations, the nineteenth century Indian renaissance, etc. But have we studied the interaction of all these three factors throughout the gamut and the range of Indian history? If we do so even now, what, we have to ask ourselves, would be the norms of such a study?

What is the impact of our national character on the formation and character of the 'State' in India? Power is pre-eminently a social factor. What is the impress of Religion and Culture on it? Is not the impress or contour of religion, however stable it might appear, subject to change? What is the nature of priesthood in Brahmanism? The character of the Sangha? What was the degree of influence of these on the prevailing state forms? What is the true nature of the medieval *Ulama* and its impact on and occasional confrontation with the medieval state in India? What about resistance movements and heresies in religion? What part has persecution played in history? How does the *Harijan* and *Girijan* fare in society today? What about decline of religions and the growth of secularism?

If state and religion have compulsive authority, culture is spontaneous, variable and free. Even at the risk of some inherent danger in definition, culture may be said to consist of two facades, internal and external. On the one hand it includes the totality of all *inner* expressions of the human mind, is spiritual, moral and material life, — social inter-communications, art, literature, science and technology, etc. *Externally*, it is to be equated with society in its broadest sense. It is a slow and unconscious

coagulation of myriads of elements, through successive generations, representing what may be called miracles of mind. How has culture grown in India through the ages? How has it decayed? Are there any laws of this growth and decay? We have learned works or chapters in research studies on the subject split up in different periods and in different regions. Is there any single book dealing with the various elements of culture and its evolution, — the order or stages of cultural development in India for the general reader or common man to appreciate the national cultural heritage of India? Do we know *all* about urbanization and the great centres of intellectual or commercial exchange in India through the ages, comparable to Athens in Greece, Basra, Kufa, Wasit, Cordova, al-Kahira (Cairo) in medieval Islam and Florence in Italy? How did our cities, Takshashila, Pataliputra, Purushapura, Ujjaini, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Kanchi, Delhi, Agra, Jaunpur, Lucknow, Calcutta, etc., function as radiating centres of culture through the ages?

It is generally believed that traditional society was rigidly opposed to change and mobility on account of inflexible and rigid prescriptions of caste system. But this is an erroneous assumption. Social mobility can be traced right from ancient times down to medieval times. The theory of Brahmanic supremacy enshrined in the *Purusha Sukta* hymn, the rise of the protestant movements of Jainism and Buddhism, founded by Kshatriya claimants to religious leadership, the resuscitation of Vedic Brahmanic culture, may be regarded as fleeting sea-saw in caste tension. The humble Rigvedic Vaishya cattle-breeder with a peasant-tribal origin grew into a rich *asitikottivibhava* merchant, organised in guilds in the Buddhist and Jain literature. The immense assimilative capacity of Indian civilization in absorbing the 'foreign elements, the Yavanas, Scythians, Parthians, Bactrians and the Hunas in the body-politic and their integration into the traditional society as Kshatriyas and later as Rajputs, illustrates what sociologists term the 'openness' of the system.

A major process of culture change (though not structural change) was the process called 'Sanskritization,' by which a 'low' Hindu caste inched its way up towards a higher caste (*dwija*) through a change in ritual, ideology, customs (including hypergamous marriage customs) and manner of living. A tribal or semi-tribal or any other group may also claim to belong to 'Hindu' caste. The newer claimed status is higher than what the society conceded. But mobility occurs even without 'Sanskritization.' The less fortunate ones sink in status. Even the ritually dominant Brahmanas might actually be socially lower than their richer clientele (*jajman*). (cf. M. N. Srinivasan, *Social Change in Modern India*, 1966.)

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Sanskritization also illustrates the operation of 'reference group' process.

Acquisition of political power has been a fruitful factor in social mobility. The upward movement of lower castes was at times sanctified by the people themselves, as in the case of non-Kshatriya Gopala of the Pala dynasty. The authority of a successful or ambitious general and claim to Kshatriya status came to be legitimatised by Brahmanas, as in the case of Vijanagar, or by bardic castes, genealogists, mythographers (*Vahivanca*) as among the Rajputs and Kolis. Even Shivaji was 'Sanskritized.' His elevation as a Kshatriya was worked out by the greatest Brahmanic priest of the age, Ganga Bhatta of Benares.

Social mobility was 'widespread and persistent' in medieval India. The medieval 'humanistic' saints of the Bhakti School and the Sufis threw up a challenges to social inequality, as reflected in contemporary Bhakti literature, the *Malfuzat* and *Maktubat*.

There was another kind of social mobility in Mughal India. Akbaride liberalism stimulated seekers of administrative careers and handicraftsmen, Muslim but specially Hindu, to migrate to the court. The policy of optimum cultivation accelerated mobility not only of migrating villagers but also of whole villages. One later example of such permanent and wholesale migration with governmental emphasis on local stability based on religion was that of the Afghan Rohillas into Katehr renamed Rohilkhand with consequential changes in pattern of inter-group relationships. Growing agrarian oppression goaded peasants to abscond from their lands in the villages in the Mughal empire to the forest, city or territories of a Rajah or to the army, as testified to by the French Bernier and the Venetian Manucci, without any corresponding migration from the city to the village, as in the 18th century. The cultivator either lost *status* or freedom. The 'expropriation of village communities' by military-zamindar families, tribes and castes viz., Jats, Mewatis, Bais, Rajputs and Ujjainias was the logical result. Akbar's census operation sought not only to determine the numerical strength but to fix population in a specific area so as to stabilize social relations. Gradually corporate villages tended to dissolution and with it the community. The factors at work in Mughal India came to be echoed during the world-wide depression of the thirties of this century.

In pre-British India social mobility was fostered by the peculiarly fluid political system. Mughal administrative decline in 18th century indirectly encouraged the growth of a new social class,—of bankers, contractors and revenue agents,—who began to overshadow the older aristocracy. Again a caste with military traditions, growing number and

increasing land ownership captured political power, sanskritised the ritual and living and claimed Kshatriya status which was buttressed in theory or myth by the ministrant, indigent but ritually superior Brahmans. At the apex of the socio-political pyramid was the nominal Mughal emperor to whom the symbol of legitimacy still clung. Next, the successful adventurer founders had their usurped suzerainty legalised in the succession states of Oudh, Bengal, Hyderabad and the Punjab, where regional leaders or families, members of dominant castes (Rajputs or Bhumi-har Brahmans, *Zamindars*, or *rajas*, etc.) were bound to them by political allegiance or financial or land connections. Down the scale there were local chiefs, tax-collectors or adventurer, controlling the peasants, artisans, merchants, serfs, and slaves. The system favoured the trend of upward social mobility as leaders of dominant local groups eked their way up. In Benares it was Mansa Ram, a Bhumi-har *zamindar* in Jaunpur, who replaced his master, the local *amil* and tax collector, and procured from Safdar Jang, Nawab-wazir of Oudh, a grant for his son, (Rajah) Balwant Singh. In Central Gujrat it was the Rajputs, Patidars, Kolis and the Muslim officials.

'Modernization' with its rational and positive spirit, and mass appeal has certainly a wider connotation than 'westernization,' growing since the 19th century. The explanation of the paradox in Indian's social history viz., the change from the *open society* of Vedic to Buddhist periods to the *closed society* from Manu onwards will be highly instructive.

The constraints of Indian traditional society with its caste-oriented value system are sometimes regarded as obstacles to economic growth in India, as by Abbe Dubois (1821), C.E. Trevelyan (1838), and Vera Anstey (1936) and Kusum Nair (1962). To Kapp (*Hindu Culture*, 1963), caste militates against personal initiative by emphasizing passive acceptance of 'traditional occupations.' Weber (*The Religion of India*, tr. 1958) even speaks of the 'almost irresistible social force' of Hinduism, the impact of which on economic progress in South Asia was 'essentially negative.' But Morris D. Morris (1967) has disproved that the Indian value system was an obstacle to economic growth or change.

Economic transformation is but another phase of social change. It is a vast complex, the offspring of political, administrative, and socio-economic factors. Historical forces, sociological concepts and economic theory mingle here. I take only one aspect of it as a sample for consideration—the growth of capitalism. Marx sought its essence in a particular mode of production. It was not a system of commodity production but where labour power was itself a commodity. Max Weber holds that 'Capitalism and capitalistic enterprises' existed throughout history but it was

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only in Western Europe that 'sober bourgeois capitalism' existed as 'exploitation of a rationalized organisation for the mechanised mass production of goods built up with free labour and based on a free, specially peaceful market for sales.' It is not to be expected that such features could be traced in ancient or medieval times. Werner Sombart has, however, pointed out that 'capitalist spirit' existed even in embryo at some time in the distant past. The German Historical School distinguished between the medieval 'natural economy' and the succeeding money economy. Earl Hamilton describes the system where 'wealth other than land' is used to secure an income. Pirenne, equating capitalism with any acquisitive use of money, has traced it in the 12th century. Cunningham emphasized its commercial phase in which possession of capital and the habit of pushing trade became dominant.

Medieval Asian trade did exhibit the phenomenon of 'political capitalism' of Van Leur's connotation, in which, overhanging its central arch, the pedlar, the carrier of world trade, there were individuals with unusual accumulations of capital. Persia, like Portugal, had a tradition for political capitalism. It was exhibited in Persian silk trade since time of Shah Ismail Safavi in the 16th century and it reached its apogee with the entrepreneurial activity of Shah Abbas I.

In Mughal India, too, we have definite instances of 'political capitalism,' implying accumulations of capital in individual hands which were not merely hoarded or buried underground but used in business and trade with an eye to profit. It is not generally known that members of the Mughal imperial family and a few Mughal nobles invested a part of their fortunes in entrepreneurial activities like owning ships, trading with foreign countries and engaging in internal trade of the country (*Sauda-i-Khas*) and establishing monopolies in articles of common consumption. Akbar's wife had a ship known as the *Great Rahimi* of Surat of 1500 tons, a huge ship in those days, which fell a victim to English piracy during Jahangir's reign. The full story of the diplomatic rivalry and intrigue over the clashing interests of high personages in the Mughal court has not yet been adequately studied. Thus the Red Sea trade was a bone of contention between Prince Khurram and the English East India Company. Sir Thomas Roe was backed in his efforts by pro-English Nurjahan with decided political proclivities against the Prince. Nurjahan herself had her own commercial activities, to further which she sought to utilise the English. She was instrumental in even securing a *firman* for the English, so that to Roe she became 'my solicitor and her brother...my broker,' 1616 (*Letters Received*, i, 150). Asaf Khan's own commercial interests led him

to make an *entente* with the English and show undue concessions to them, which Khurram considered to be highly injurious to the interests of the Indian merchants. Again, Muqarrab Khan, who had his own axe to grind, sought to create bad blood between Asaf Khan and Roe.<sup>1</sup>

Some exceptionally rich and influential Indian merchants and brokers played a very important, sometimes dominant, part in the commercial life of the country as a whole, besides assisting the foreign companies in their commercial pursuit. Sometimes it is these Indians, Moslems, Banias or Chettis, rather than the Dutch and the English, who controlled the entire wholesale trade in their jurisdictions. The seventeenth century tradition of individual merchants like Virji Vora (Baharji Borah) of Surat, the owner of 80 lakhs of rupees and reputed to be the richest merchant in the world, Haji Said Beg and Haji Qasim, also of Surat, Malay of the East Coast, Chimcham (? Shyam Chand) Khemchand of Balasore was kept up in the first half of 18th century. Indians continued to participate as investors and carriers of the then flourishing external and internal trade of India. In the Deccan there were, among others, merchants like Kanakarayya Mudali, Ananda Ranga Pillai, Seshachala Chetty and others. Merchants and bankers like Jagat Seths, Umichand, Khwaja Wajid in Bengal and Arjunji Nathji in Western India participated in politics as well. The process of India's economic decline is fairly well-known. But the decline of her mercantile marine and of her mercantile communities and families still remains to be written.

Lastly, I would like to refer to another glaring lacuna in modern Indian historiography. Till recently this meant history of British India and its constitutional relations with Indian India. The internal history of the Indian States, in different aspects, political, economic, social and cultural, has remained a neglected chapter. Did these remain static under the rule of their Princes or did the wave of change, parallel to or comparable with that sweeping over British India, lash their shores as well, and if so, with what intensity or momentum? Perhaps a study of the inner development in the Indian counterpart of British India, both in individual units and in general, may be highly revealing and useful.

Access to original sources is a primary need but the first step towards it is the linguistic equipment of the scholar. But it is not an easy problem. He has to ransack the material in all classes of sources in different languages each one of which has to be utilised, examined and assessed criti-

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1. I am indebted to my research student Sri P. N. Chakravarty, M.A., for supplying me some facts on the subject.

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cally and scientifically. Then and then only can he expect to bring new facts to light. He has next to reshuffle the variegated mosaic of information, so as to present a clear outline with a recognisable vision of life. By this process alone some positive contribution to knowledge can be made.

Permit me, to voice my alarm that the urge to learn new languages, even among the best non-language students of universities has reached almost a vanishing point. Everyone tries to take soft options and to follow the line of least resistance. Perhaps a stage has come to include a paper on language, e. g., Persian, Dutch, etc., depending on the period concerned, in the History syllabi of universities and establish a school of languages in universities so as to attract promising, talented students to learn languages. My efforts, backed by Dr P. C. Gupta, then Head of the Department of History, to have such a school for Persian in Jadavpur University with the sanction of the U. G. C. could not materialise as the person selected was expected to give up his permanent job elsewhere to become a whole-timer in a term job, which he could not very well do.

I need not dwell in detail on the difficulties of the researcher. Many of my predecessors have done so from this chair. I myself referred to some of these in the Calcutta session in Section IV in 1955. It is my firm conviction that historical research now a days has become a very costly affair.

In our country there are now, relatively speaking, excellent opportunities of doing research, thanks to the generous assistance of the U. G. C. and the Indian Council of Historical Research, — opportunities not available to most scholars in our bygone days. In fact the latter is virtually performing this Congress's role as a clearing house of research. But the vast majority of not-so-lucky researchers have to fend for themselves. From felling the tree to building the ship, working with inadequate tools, in uncongenial environment, being digger as well as architect, they have to toil very hard indeed. The lone researcher is likely to be marooned in the uncharted vast ocean of source materials or be exhausted in drilling them out of dreary and inhospitable environment. Few perhaps can say with confidence that the quest for material has been a source of pleasure. This Congress can never realise the objective, laid down by its founders, of becoming a forum of historical research unless its members receive generous assistance from the academic powers-that-be. Now a days neither the government nor universities count much in this respect. May I, therefore, appeal to the University Grants Commission and the Indian Council of Historical Research to extend the scope of their generous grants to a wider circle of teachers and students, members and members-to-be of the

Congress, alike, in the spirit of T. H. Green's 'hindering the hindrances' and according to the principles of 'open society.' The 'hungry sheep' look up to them and they have to be fed.

Since the foundation of this Congress in 1935 numerous changes, political, social and cultural, have taken place. Several new academic bodies have sprung up. Apart from the University Grants Commission there are the Indian Council of Historical Research, the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, New Delhi, the Centre for Social Sciences Research, Calcutta, besides the Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta. There are also the Indian Historical Records Commission and the All-Indian Oriental Conference. The professed objects of these are in several ways closely inter-linked with and overlap some of the major objectives of the Indian History Congress. Lacking funds, this Congress lacks power, direction and means to implement some of its objectives. A time has perhaps come to consider what the future relation of this Congress of ours with the other bodies should be. Will the Congress follow the path of association, or dissociation or isolation? Will it still continue to be merely an annual pilgrimage of scholars, separate from the sessions of the Indian Historical Records Commission, and the All India Oriental Conference or will it change its character and develop into a more active policy-making organisation, with greater association and co-ordination with all these bodies?

I submit before you the following three-tier scheme for the reconstruction of our country's history. *First*, an all-out attempt should be made to carry on analytical and fundamental research and write history on two planes, an all-India plane and regional or local plane on up-to-date lines of scientific enquiry, —collection of facts, testing of-evidence, interpretation and conclusion, —so that accuracy, objectivity and readability are achieved as much as a recognizable vision of life. Indeed the writing of Indian history should proceed simultaneously on both the planes on parallel lines, for the task of reconstruction cannot be adequately performed without intensive regional or local historical studies in different spheres, —political, military, social, economic and cultural.

*Second*. Simultaneously with the analytical research on both the planes, attempt should be made to write synthetic history, which would present the fruits of research in a lucid manner for the benefit of the layman. This may not strictly be research of the first category mentioned above. Nevertheless it would still be research in another sense, as strenuous as the first, covering the latest researches in books, monographs, journals, etc. This also must never be subjective or prejudiced history. If the work



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of the *analytic* and *synthetic* historians supplement and buttress each other along parallel lines, the subtle and esoteric art that is history would stand revealed and its gifts would be made accessible to the educated, rational, thinking sections of society with suitable linguistic equipment.

*Third.* Popular adaptations from the works of the first two tiers will have to be made so that the masses may understand the broad currents of history and culture of our country. All modern mass media of instruction (the 'mobile multiplier' of Lerner) will have to be harnessed, including newspapers and periodicals, audio-visual education,—movies, radio, television,—lectures, travelling exhibitions, development of a national programme of educational extension services. Museums must not be dead institutions but active centres of research and forums of public education through which people gain an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural environment of their national heritage. Thus will history be brought to the common man. He will understand the heritage, national as well as regional.

Indian civilization has been compared to *nyagrodha* (down-grower, banyan tree), whose vitalising essence is difficult to discern. If the knowledge as well as the assessment of our past with all its grandeur and all its pitfalls, is thus broadcast, the seeds of the Indian *nyagrodha* would be scattered among the people.

## Golden Temple, Symbol of Piety and Heroism

GANDA SINGH

### **How Sikhism Changed the Psychology of the People**

The *Darbār Sāhib*, as the Golden Temple of Amritsar is commonly known, is a symbol of the culture and conduct of the people of the Panjab. It enshines a liberal religious tradition consecrated by noble deeds of piety, sacrifice and heroism. Unlike the old Indian temples with a single entrance, it has four doors opening out in four different directions offering welcome to people without any distinction of caste or creed. Dedicated to no particular deity, and with no idol or image installed in it, it has no sectarian bias. The word *darbār* literally means a dwelling, a court or an audience chamber. And in this great chamber the visitor is admitted into audience of the Invisible Lord, whose praises are recited and sung in the words of the Gurus and other saints and divines of India. The *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, or the Sikh Scripture, installed in the middle of the chamber in 1604 is the bible of the people. It includes hymns by the Sikh Gurus as well as by Hindu, Muslim and the so-called untouchable saints and sages. It is written in the spoken idiom of the people to whom the Masters delivered their message of devotion to God and service to humanity. In addition to its cosmopolitan character and outlook, it is the only scripture which has come down through generations in its original form, without the change of a single letter or a vowel sign.

Amritsar (the *Sar* of *Amrit* or the Pool of Immortal Life) was the name originally given to the tank, excavated in 1577 by Guru Ramdas, the fourth Sikh Guru, who had founded the city three years earlier. The place and its surrounding lands were then known as Chak Guru. Guru Ramdas's successor, Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru, added to the fame and glory of the town. He had the tank built in lime masonry and constructed the temple in the centre of it. He composed and sang his hymns on the banks of the sacred pool and preached the message of truth and truthful living to his visitors and disciples. He reorganized from here the Sikh congregations at home and abroad, and Amritsar became the nucleus of the faith emphasizing values of love, sacrifice and humanity.

Guru Nanak had laid the foundation of Sikhism, the path of a disciplined life. Like the founder, Guru Angad and Guru Amar Das had set before their disciples—the Sikhs—very high examples of personal

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conduct. Guru Ramdas had created for them a rallying centre in Amritsar. Guru Arjan assembled the hymns of his predecessors and compiled these, along with his own and those of other Indian saints, into the *Granth Sāhib*, the Holy Book, and gave to Sikhism the shape of a regular church.

But the Sikhs were not meant to be a sect of ascetic recluses. They were to be a band of the servants of God and His people. "Having created the human body, God has installed His very self therein," had been said by Guru Nanak. And "this world is the chamber of God wherein the True one resides"—*Ih jagg sachche kī hai kothrī sachché kā vich vās*. Therefore, with this human body, "Let us be of service in this world so that we may find a seat in the court of the Lord"—*vich dunīyā sev kamāiyē, tān dargeh bāisan pāiyē*.

These teachings of the Gurus, the abolition of the distinctions of caste and creed and the establishment of Sikh congregations throughout the country, with Amritsar as their Mecca and the *Granth Sāhib* as their bible, made the Sikhs a living community devoted to the uplift and welfare of their fellow countrymen. The spirit of service and self-sacrifice engendered by the teachings of the Gurus crystalized at the time of Guru Arjan into distinct national traits.

Guru Arjan's increasing popularity among Hindus and Muslims aroused suspicions in the mind of Emperor Jahangir, who wrote in his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* thus : "A Hindu, Arjan by name, lived ... in the garb of a *pir* and *shaikh* and had captivated the hearts of many simple minded Hindus, and foolish and stupid Muslims by his ways and means ... They called him *Guru* and from all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For years, the thought had been presenting itself to me that I should either put an end to this false traffic or that he (Guru Arjan) should be brought into the fold of Islam." Then referring to the allegation against the Guru having blessed his rebellious son Khusro, he said : "*I fully knew his heresies*. I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, and having handed over his houses, mansions and children to Murtaza Khan and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures." The orders were carried out and the Guru was tortured to death in 1606 A. D.

Guru Arjan thus suffered martyrdom at the altar of his faith. His successor, Guru Hargobind, seeing that the tyranny of the Mughal authorities in India had become unbearable, relegated the rosary to the treasury, accorded sanction to the use of steel in the defence of *Dharma*

and for the protection of the oppressed. He himself wore two swords on the occasion of his accession at *Akāl Takht* at Amritsar as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority—*Pīrī* and *Mīrī*—the combination of the *Deg* and *Tegh*—the kettle to supply food to the needy and the sword to smite the oppressors. This was the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into a militant church.

Azur Sasani (Muhsin Fani), a contemporary of Guru Hargobind, tells us in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* that "the Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables; and three hundred cavaliers and sixty artillerymen were always in his service." This was the first corps of the Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar. It was near the site of the Khalsa College that the Sikhs fought in 1628 their first battle against the Mughal levies of Emperor Shahjahan.

But Guru Hargobind was not a mere soldier. He was primarily a Saint, a *Guru*, the sixth in direct spiritual inheritance from Guru Nanak. He had taken to martial ways with a view to creating among his people a will to resistance and preparing them to stand up to the tyranny and oppression of the ruling race. Guru Hargobind's reply to a question by the Maratha saint *Shrī Sāmāth* Ram Das is very significant. During his north-Indian rambles *Sāmāth* Ram Das met Guru Hargobind at Srinagar (Garhwal) in about 1634. Fully armed and riding a horse, the Guru had just returned from a hunting excursion. "I had heard that you occupied the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak," said Ram Das. "Guru Nanak was a *tyāgi Sādhū*, a saint who had renounced the world. You are wearing arms and keeping an army and horses. You allow yourself to be addressed as *Sacha Padshah*, the True King. What sort of a *Sadhu* are you?" asked the Maratha saint. Guru Hargobind replied: "Internally a hermit and externally a prince. Arms mean protection to the poor and destruction to the tyrant. *Baba* Nanak had not renounced the world but had renounced *māyā*, i.e., the self and ego."

These words of Guru Hargobind found a ready response in the heart of Ram Das, who, as quoted in the *Pothī Panjāh Sākhīān*, spontaneously said, "this appealeth to my mind—*Yeh hamāre man bhāvti hai*." He found in the words of the Guru an expression of his own inner spirit and latent ideas. He seems to have realized that the Marathas, who had much in common with the people of the Panjab in their physical and spiritual make up, could well imbibe the spirit of the Guru and collaborate with the Sikhs in resisting and vanquishing the intolerant Mughals.

The vision of Guru Hargobind and *Sāmāth* Ram Das was fulfilled in the eighteenth century.

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Guru Hargobind was a great missionary as well, and it was as a result of his own work and that of the orders of *Udāsis* and *Masands*, and other organizations, encouraged and strengthened by him, that the faith of Sikhism spread beyond the boundaries of India. To this Azur Sasaki (Muhsin Fani) bears witness saying that "there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found."

Guru Hargobind was succeeded by Guru Har Rai who in turn was followed by Guru Harkrishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. The last named was executed at Delhi in 1675 under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb for his sympathy with the helpless Brahmins of Kashmir whom the Emperor wished all to be brought in the fold of Islam. (Bamezai, *History of Kashmir*; *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, English translation by Sir J.N. Sarkar, pp. 51-2.

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last of the Gurus, has been rightly called the soldier-saint of India. In his youth he applied himself closely to self-education and was deeply impressed by the idea that God had been sending saviours from time to time to uphold righteousness and to destroy evil. He felt that he himself had this mission to perform in his own country which suffered under the yoke of religious and political tyranny. The teachings of his predecessors and the unique examples of martyrdom had elevated the spirits of the Sikhs. But the old social shackles of Brahmanism, such as caste system, had not yet been completely broken. This hindered the growth of a homogeneous well-knit class of people inspired by a common national ideal. In fact, the idea of the division of labour had created among the people well marked groups and classes which, with the passage of time, had developed into rigid castes with deep-rooted prejudices. The Sikh institutions of *Sangat* (mixed congregations) and *Pangat* (dining together sitting in one row) had gone a long way towards demolishing caste. But the difference in the social level of the low-caste Sudras and the high-born Brahmins and Kshatriyas was so great that they could not join together in any common cause. These differences and prejudices could only be abolished by a bold reformer ready to fight at once the religious fraternities and the political rulers of the land.

The first thing to do was to change the psychology of the people. This the Guru achieved by introducing a new form of baptism, and giving to the initiates the common surname of *Singh* and enjoining upon the baptised Singhs, to be called the *Khalsa*, the Master's own, and to wear, in future, the same five symbols, all beginning with the letter *K*: *Kesh* (uncut hair), *Kanghā* (a comb), *Kachhā* (a pair of shorts), *Karā* (an iron bracelet) and *Kirpān* (a sword). Bravery, as much as truth and purity, was to be their religion. The Khalsa was inspired by a sense of

divine mission, and no fear of any earthly power was to deflect them from their duty. A tremendous change was thus brought about in the character of the people. The lowest of the low in society, the sweepers, the barbers and the confectioners, were transformed, as if by miracle, into doughty warriors who, along with the baptized Jats and Khatris, fought under the Guru's command as many as fourteen battles, in twelve of which the Sikhs were distinctly successful against the Hindu Rajas and the Mughal forces.

Soon after the assassination of Guru Gobind Singh at Nander in the Deccan where he was fatally stabbed in October 1708, by an agent of the Governor of Sirhind, the Sikhs of Amritsar had to defend themselves at first against the *Amin* of Patti and then against the combined forces of *Chaudhri* of Naushera Pannuan and the Governor of Lahore. This was the first trial of their military strength under their own elected leaders and they proved equal to the occasion. This was in April 1709.

Towards the end of 1710, Emperor Bahadur Shah marched with a huge army against Banda Singh, the first leader of the Khalsa after Guru Gobind Singh. On the 10th of December (Shawwal 29, 1122 A.H.), he ordered an edict to be issued directing his *fauj-dars* to kill the worshippers of Nanak (the Sikhs) wherever found—*Nānak prastān rā har ja ki ba-yāband, ba-gatl rasānand*. The Mughal empire was yet too strong for the rising power of the Sikhs. Banda Singh was driven out of his possessions in the province of Sirhind to seek shelter in the hills and the Emperor moved to Lahore. On the 30th of December, 1711, Amritsar was formally granted to Ajit Singh, the adopted son of Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh. Amritsar henceforward regained its past importance and became the centre of Sikh activities.

The management of the town and temple was entrusted to Bhai Mani Singh, a revered Sikh saint and scholar of the time, who had to pay with his life for his efforts to bring the Sikhs together at Amritsar. He was hacked to pieces joint by joint at Lahore in 1734. Moving columns now issued from the provincial headquarters in search of the Sikhs. Many of them were captured and killed. Their admission to the tank and temples was banned and sentries were posted all round the city to watch out for them. But these oppressions failed to conquer the Sikhs. They shot out with vengeance whenever they found a chance. Some performed their pilgrimage in secret disguise: "but in general, according to a contemporary Muhammedan author," says John Malcolm, "the Sikh horsemen were seen riding at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners, but they used, on such occasion, to seek, instead of avoiding, the

#### GOLDEN TEMPLE, SYMBOL OF PIETY AND HEROISM

crown of martyrdom, and the same authority states that an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken in his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith." (*Sketch of the Sikhs*, 88.)

This indiscriminate persecution of the Sikhs continued for over forty years (1710-1753), and, during the governorships of Zakariya Khan, Yahyia Khan and Mir Mannu, it reached its culminating point. In hundreds and thousands, men women and children were captured from their villages and carried in irons to Lahore. There they were paraded through the bazars of the city and then taken to the *Nakhās*, the Horse Market, outside the Delhi gate, to be cut up limb by limb, flayed alive or broken on the wheel. Throughout this period, "not one (Sikh) abjured his faith or perjured his soul to preserve 'his muddy vesture of decay.'"

In the closing years of the thirties and the early years of the forties of the eighteenth century, a large number of Sikhs had to seek shelter in the far off hills and jungles.

The desecration in 1742 of the Darbar Sahib by Massa Ranghar of Mandiali, a Muslim official, was a challenge to the honour and heroism of the Sikhs, then living in the desert of Jaipur. Two of them, Mehtab Singh of Mirankot and Sukha Singh of Mari Kambo, travelled all the way to Amritsar to avenge the insult to the Darbar Sahib. Showing unique courage and presence of mind and braving many a danger, they succeeded in getting at Massa Ranghar and slaying him.

In the Panjab Ahmad Shah Durrani found his strongest opponents in the Sikhs who fought valiantly for every inch of their motherland. The Shah had brought the great Mughal to his knees, he had defeated the Jats and the Marathas, but the Sikhs stood unvanquished. He made several efforts to reduce them to submission, but with no success. Twice in 1757 and 1762, he sacked the city of Amritsar, blew up the temple with gun-powder and filled the tank with the dead bodies of men, carcasses of slaughtered cows and the debris of demolished edifices. But with undaunted courage the Sikhs continued the struggle and were successful not only in driving off the enemies from the sacred precincts but also in freeing the entire Panjab from the clutches of the Afghans. In one of his last efforts to retake the Panjab from the Sikhs in 1764-65, the Shah attacked Amritsar with a huge army. There was no Sikh force in town then. A batch of thirty Sikhs under the leadership of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh rushed out of the *bungahs* to oppose an army of thirty-six thousand Afghans and fell fighting in defence of the Darbar Sahib. An eye-witness Baluch chronicler, Qazi Nur Muhammad, thus describes this supreme sacrifice of Sikhs :

"When the Shah arrived at the Chak (Amritsar), there was not a

single infidel to be seen there. But a few of them had remained in an enclosure so that they might spill their blood. And they sacrificed their lives for the Gurus. When they saw the renowned king and the army of Islam they came out of the enclosure. They were only thirty in number. But they had not a grain of fear in them. They had neither the fear of slaughter nor the dread of death. Thus they grappled with the *Ghazis*, and in grappling with them they spilt their own blood. All the accursed Sikhs were killed." (*Jang Namah*, 35.)

With the conquests of Sirhind and Lahore by the Sikhs in 1763 and 1764, the Panjab heaved a sigh of relief and afforded an opportunity to the *Misaldar* Sardars and Maharaja Ranjit Singh to unite and strengthen the country. The tank and temple of Amritsar were reconstructed by the *Misaldar* Sardars who spent nine lakhs of rupees on its renovation. Maharaja Ranjit Singh spent large sums on the beautification and enrichment of the Golden Temple.

During the British regime Amritsar remained the centre of Sikh activity. The Singh Sabha Movement had its birth here in 1873. From here sprang the renaissance which earlier in the present century influenced the community and created new impulses for literary, social and national regeneration. The Sikhs' foremost educational institutions, the Khalsa College and the Guru Nanak Dev University, are situated here.

It was from here that the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shromani Akali Dal guided and brought about reform in the control of the Sikh gurdwaras in the nineteen twenties. It was again at Amritsar that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims mixed their martyrs' blood in their national fight against the alien rule.

Since independence, Amritsar has been a border city of India. But it still retains its grip on the life of the Panjab. For the Panjabis it is a city of unique inspiration. The Golden Temple and all the history behind it are their proud heritage.



## The Scythian Origins of the Sikh-Jat

HAR IQBAL SINGH SARA\*

I had at another place occasion to remark that the ancestors of the Sikh-Jats thrived in agriculture and warfare in the Scythian homelands around the Black Sea and the southern Russian steppe, and that Greek goldsmiths made them ornaments of the styles which we to this day find in the Punjab and Rajasthan as brought by them. This is an attempt to elaborate.

Recent excavations in the Ukraine and Crimea are showing the truth of the observations of Ptolemy in the second century A.D. that the Jats are 'Jatu' mentioned by Ptolemy, and the 'Zanthii' mentioned by Strabo, to all of which recent references have been made in the census records of the Punjab such as the one compiled by Sir Denzil Ibbetson, earlier in this century. The finds point to the visible links of the Jat and Scythians. This new archaeological evidence so recently unearthed was not available when the former writers and authors wrote their works on the subject.

1. First, there has been found a gold pectoral: a typical Punjab-Jat ਕੈਠਾ (*Kaintha*), weighing 2½ pounds, excavated at Tovsta, in Ukraine, in 1971. The detail of this 'Kaintha' shows 44 golden animals. On its inner band, cows, ewes and mares tenderly suckle their young: a horse scratches itself. At the centre of this band two Scythians, matted hair and full beards, busily cooperate in the making of a garment. The design and motifs of this ornament are typically those used by Jat folk, though the artistry might be less sophisticated compared to the refined Greek craftsmanship used in the Tovsta *Kaintha*.

2. The characteristic Jat drinking vessel, ਛਹਾ 'Chhana' can be easily traced to its origins in the 4th century B.C., four-inch high, wide broad-brimmed drinking cup, that was found in a tomb at Gaimonov, north of the Crimea. It features too long-haired full bearded Scythian warriors (whom you might easily take to be Sikh-Jats of the Punjab village) with weapons and wearing clothing typical of Scythians. Their faces and hands are wrought of silver and their garments of gold. So striking is the resemblance, facila, dress, and demeanour, that the two Scythians engraved on this ਛਹਾ *Chhana*-type cup could substitute for

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known Sikh Khalsa warriors, such as Akali Phula Singh.

3. The Scythians were ostentatious enough to show off gold nuggets or plaques sewn onto their garments of dress. This idea has been carried through in their life in the Punjab in later centuries. In fact, gold nuggets as part of Sikh coinage ਬੁਘਤੀਆਂ (*Bughteean*) were used in the Sikh kingdom in the period of Ranjit Singh's rule of Punjab. This provides an interesting link in the identification of the Jat and Scythian ornaments of gold in the form of plaques or nuggets.

4. Another ਛੋਨਾ 'Chhana'-resembling cup was discovered at Solokha in the Ukraine. It depicts a Scythian hunter on horse-back aided by dogs, ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਕੁੱਤੇ (*Shikari-Kutay*); he is drawing back his arm to drive his spear into a wounded lion; his dress proclaims him a Scythian, but his beardless face is more typical of the Greek ideal youth—a favourite subject in classical art by Greek Art Masters. Hunting is also a feature of the activity of some of our Gurus and also of succeeding Sikhs.

5. Then there is the find of a gold comb, identical to the Sikh *Kangha*, of 4th century B.C., discovered in the tomb of a man at Solokha (south Ukraine near the Black Sea), who apparently had worn it as a decoration in his long hair.

6. A 4th century B.C. small gold plaque, barely  $2 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  inches, found in Crimea, hammered out in low relief by a Greek artisan, depicts a Scythian warrior wielding a spear charging an adversary. The detail captures the rider's Scythian dress and horse's bridle, reminiscent of a village Sikh-Jat in action on horse-back.

7. It is known that there were Greek trading posts or colonies ringing the eastern shore of the Black Sea (including Crimea) where there were Greek goldsmiths, craftsmen and traders. They provided artistic ornaments, manufactured jewellery to prosperous Scythians, and probably in exchange for Scythian wheat, honey, oils, hides and other agricultural produce. Scythians were highly fond of display and ostentation (as are apparently Sikh-Jats, what with their blown up display of wealth and means at weddings, an intense and exaggerated style of mourning in deaths). The suit of clothes they wore was sometimes adorned with sewed-on plaques or bars of gold, for show. This idea of show or display of their wealth has been evident in the dress styles and bold manners of the Sikh-Jat-society at ceremonial or festive occasions in the Punjab. (It is interesting to note that the modern Russian word for city is 'Gord' : which equates to the Panjabi 'Garh' of 'Leningrad' and 'Shakrgarh'.)

Leaving the Punjab aside, now let us turn to the Scythian homelands.

The Scythians, the stock that has supplied the Indian Sikh-Jats, were

#### THE SCYTHIAN ORIGINS OF THE SIKH-JAT

unique, in that as the first mounted nomads they were the first to attract the attention of historians. They are the horsemen for whom the record is most complete, enriched not only by the colourful accounts of ancient observers, such as Herodotus, but by the discoveries of archaeologists also.

They were in all respects a passionate people; bearded men with dark deep set eyes, weather-cured faces and long wind-snarled hair. They wore trousers in preference to the robe-like garb of settled men.

The Scythians themselves had a legend that they sprang from the three sons of a certain Tragitaus—a person of superhuman birth, who dwelled in the Scythians' Black Sea domain. Together the three brothers ruled the land<sup>1</sup> until four golden implements—a plough, a yoke, a battle axe and a drinking cup — ਹੱਲ, ਪੰਜਾਲੀ, ਟਾਕੁਆ<sup>2</sup> ਅਤੇ ਛੋਨਾ — fell from the sky and suddenly began to blaze. Colaxais (shall we say ਕੋਲੂ 'Kolu' ?), the youngest proved to be the only one of the brothers who could pick up the burning objects and thus became the sole ruler of the Scythian kingdom.

Some scholars speculate that the Scythians came from the Volga basin and reached the South Russian steppe sometime around 1000 B.C., displacing the Cimmerians whose homeland it had been. By the end of the 6th century B.C. the Scythians' mastery of the horse had made them undisputed rulers of a flat and grassy domain that reached westward along the Azov and Black Sea, from the Don river to the mouth of the Danube (all of what is now Ukraine), and northward 400 miles to some nebulous boundary where the steppe vanished into an irregular sprawl of thick forests and marshes.

Through their might the Scythians dominated the farmers on the fringes of the steppe, and in its river valleys (a history repeated in the Punjab in the succeeding centuries, as it turned out). And ultimately the Scythians dominated the inhabitants of even Olbia, Tyras, Theodosia and other trading colonies of Greeks on the northern rim of the Black Sea.

Students of the history of India will recall that the expansion of the uprooted Scythian tribes led by Vima Kadphises I into the Punjab around between 50 B.C. and 50 A.D., resulted in their succeeding to the power

1. This might hold a clue to the Jat custom of joint, un-divided ownership of 'Jaddi' (hereditary) agricultural land in the Punjab which is carried on for generations as joint-property of several brothers.
2. The exact word for ਟਾਕੁਆ 'Takwa' in Ukrainian is 'Chuburchi' or Chuburch, which again resembles 'Barchchi' in Panjabi. However, the Ukrainian Chuburchi is exactly what we have as ਟਾਕੁਆ Takwa—exactly the same shape, size, etc. (often the long staff of handle can be painted or engraved).

of Greeks in the Punjab. The Greek satrap of Sialkot was killed by the Scythian settlers, as led by Kadphises. They settled right upto Muttra. The 'Sakas' of Indian history, particularly the Scythians of western India in Kathiawar, were defeated in 57 B.C. by a Raja of Ujjain. These 'Sakas' had been paying tribute to the Kushan dynasty of kings, such as Harsha, Kanishka, whose seat of power was at Peshawar. Kushans themselves were probably of Scythian origin, and ruled between 200 B.C. and 50 A.D.

Then a bit later, the 'Saka' country (Kathiawar, Malwa) was conquered by Chandragupta II, in 395 A.D.

This event, at least in part, must have contributed to the northward movement of the 'Saka' peoples—upwards and northwards into the Rajasthan area and southern river valleys of the Punjab around the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., as a latest movement of the Scythic tribes into the Punjab prior to the Mohammedan invasions of north-western India that began in the 11th century A.D.

Going back to the original Scythian homelands, the city dwellers called the enormous tract of country ruled by the nomads, 'SCYTHIA,' and the Greeks, by extension, named the horsemen 'Scythians.'

It is further interesting to note 'Seistan' (the *Asthan* of the Scythians ?), the border province of Iran, at the head of the Bolan pass into India—from where probably the Scythian tribes have entered Sind, Rajasthan and the Punjab. Stories of Rustam and Suhrab, in Persian, are of Scythian warrior princes, from Seistan.

Herodotus has recorded that Scythians were fabulously wealthy. They taxed and supervised all trade that passed through their domain on its way to the Greek trading colonies on the Black Sea. This no doubt was an expression of their will or sovereignty.

This Scythian trait of lust for asserting their will or sovereignty has curiously enough manifested itself more recently in the events of the Sikh fight against the Mughal rule in the Punjab.

Around 1739 A.D., when a general genocide of Sikhs was being carried out by the Mughal governors of Lahore and Delhi, this indomitable trait surfaced characteristically. At this time *Bhai* Bota Singh, Sikh-Jat, of Bharana (now in Pakistani-Punjab), together with his comrade *Bhai* Garja Singh Ranghreta, notwithstanding the fierce campaign against Sikhs, placed himself at a point on the Grand Trunk Road west of Tarn-Taran (in the Amritsar district of Punjab, India) as a self-appointed tax collector, essentially as an act of the will asserting sovereignty of Sikhs. They charged one anna per cart load and one pice per donkey

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load in this vicinity. The lone challenger of Imperial Mughal authority so stood on the dusty road, in defiance, with no other weapon than a stout home made staff in his hand, 'Sota.' And he sent a message to the despised Khan, Mughal governor in Lahore, thus in vernacular :

*Chithi* (letter) *likhai Singh Bota*,  
*Hath hai Sota* (holds big staff in hand);  
*Vich Rah Khalota* (and he bars thus the road) ,  
*Anna laya gadde nu, paisa laya khota*  
(charges 1 anna cart, 1 paisa per donkey);  
*Akho Bhabi Khano nun Yun Akhay Singh Bota*  
(tell the governor that is what Bota Singh is doing).

Yet the Scythians continued to live primarily by, with and for their herds of cattle, sheep and horses (and no question even today that the Sikh-Jat lives by those same occupations, and agriculture and soldiering). They used long lines of ox-drawn carts ('gadday') and tented wagons, spaced by herds, flanked by outriders, and thus traversed the land with the slow swing of seasons.

The Scythians seem to have soaked up their temperament from the steppe and its climate. Scythia was, as Ukraine is now (and one may add, as the Punjab is indeed), subject to extreme and challenging weathers. With 104 degrees temperature in the shade the sun-burnt steppe turns yellow and brown and vegetation looks no different from the Punjab vegetation in summer : parched, brown and thirsty. Sudden thunder squalls, sometimes drop upto 3 inches of rain or cannonade the earth with white hail stones. Still, on good nights the stars glare down with fierce clarity and dawn can be an explosion. Like the world around them, the Scythians were as their modern version, the Sikh-Jats are, volatile and exuberant. They could be dark and turbulent, or when times were peaceful and good, they could be bright and breezy. They loved the chase. They enjoyed dancing (of Punjab 'Bhangra') and singing to the music of drums and stringed instruments resembling lutes (Punjabi ਤੂੰਬੀ 'Toombi' or ਤੂੰਬਾ 'Toomba'). And these features of their folkloric life are characteristic of the present Sikh-Jat inhabiting the plains of the Punjab. The men were famous as hard drinkers of wines supplied by Greek traders disdaining the effeminate Greek practice of diluting the drink. In the Punjab plains now they do it even better, because the Jat has now learned how to distil liquor, and a substantial ratio of the cases before the magistrates in the Punjab has to do with distillation and possession of illicit liquor—of common use in the Punjab villages.

From textile fragments and painted wood work found in their graves,

it is quite clear that the Scythians loved bright reds, blues, and greens and yellows—all the colours they used lavishly in their clothing : and which countryside Jat man or woman doesn't have the same preferences? And Scythian had a passion for ornamentation. They wore gold torques: ਤਵੀਤਾ, ਢੋਡਣੇ ('Taveet', 'Dhodney') diadems, pendants, necklaces, arm-lets, bracelets, finger-rings and ear-rings—two for a woman and one for a man : all of which is nothing new to the Punjab villager Jat ! The Scythians embellished their horses as opulently as themselves. The remains of rugs and other fabrics that have been disinterred from tombs give evidence that the interiors of their felt tents were floored with richly patterned carpets : which obviously in the Punjab has been continued and carried in the repetition of those patterns in the embroidery : Jat domestic ਫੁਲਕਾਰੀਆਂ 'Fulkarees,' which have no parallel anywhere else. The walls were brightened with tapestries of felt hangings with elaborate applique designs.

They hunted hare, deer and boar and other wild animals. Their staple diet was mutton (the Sikh-Jat's 'Mahan-Parsad'), beef, horse flesh cooked in great cauldrons ! They loved cheeses. And above all, they relished the sharp (slightly intoxicating) drink called 'Kumiss,' made from fermented mare's milk (cf., our Punjabi 'Khatti-Lassi' ਖੱਟੀ ਲੱਸੀ).

Their horse herds were enormous, providing food, drink, hides and personal transport. Horse still is by far the most popular and well recognized form of personal transport in the Punjab. Scythians rode only geldings. Since they kept their herds on open range they had to castrate all the stallions except those needed for breeding. The love of horses is innate in the Sikh-Jat. Our Gurus too were fond of horses and there are long historical connection of the horse with Sikh history. Horses of select quality were acquired in Kabul and other places for our Guru and for use of Sikh warriors. The great 'Ghor-Charrey' troops of the Khalsa army were the last to surrender to the British after the second Anglo-Sikh war; and the parting of the Khalsa *Sowar* and his old mount when Sikhs were laying down arms is touchingly mentioned in Sita Ram Kohli's *The Sun-Set of the Sikh Empire*.

At the time of their zenith in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C., the Scythians were composed of at least 4 mounted tribes. The strongest dominated the choice pasturage and provided leadership in time of war. Herodotus names the four : 1. the Auchatee; 2. the Catiari; 3. the Trasprians; and 4. the Paralatae. The last—Paralatae—were distinguished as the foremost and called the Royal Scythians. Herodotus and other alien observers describe its chief as a King because of his wealth,

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elaborate trappings and prestige.

This tribal division of the Scythians bears a close parallel and kinship to the organization of Sikh tribes into twelve Misals in the Sikh period in the Punjab around the 18th century A.D. Of the 12 Misals, the Sukerchakia Misal of Sirdar Mahan Singh, father of His Majesty Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, ultimately gained dominion over the rest; and Ranjit Singh as the ruler of the Punjab Kingdom made a new chapter in the history of the Scythic peoples in a steppe resembling flat and fertile land—the land of the five rivers: *Panj Ab*, a home away from home.

Herodotus also mentions Sarmatians, akin to the Scythians in customs, art and language, who lived on the steppe east of the Don river. The Sarmatians were to play a crucial role in the future of the Scythians as it turned out in their later history. Herodotus also mentioned Thrace, a country of barbarians neighbouring Scythia on the west.

It would appear that in the course of history, the Scythians under long Greek influence had become urbane and sedentary. The Scythians were eventually displaced from their historical homelands and dispersed further south and west. By 346 B.C., the Sarmatians had crossed their borders, pressing westward into the Scythians' lands. A circle was inexorably closing in upon the Scythians. In another 200 years the first horseback riders, the Scythians, would be scattered and the wildest of them, like the horses they rode, would perhaps be tamed. By 100 B. C. they were, in the course of these southward and westward movements, certainly peoples in the vicinity of the present day Punjab. And they subsequently were the same peoples who settled in the Punjab itself. Identifying them as 'Jats' and as a later wave of immigrants of the northwestern plains of the Indian sub-continent, Captain Cunningham, the writer of the *History of Sikhs* identifies them with the Scythian tribes settling in the Punjab plains. I have earlier in this essay stated that the events of the Indian history, especially the conquest of the Saka country, the Malwa and Kathiawar region, at the close of the 4th century A.D. by Chandragupta II led to the further movement of these Scythian people into Rajasthan and south and central Punjab river valleys. Iran's Seistan province was probably a Scythian camping ground for sometime prior to the Scythian movement into western India, via the Bolan pass.

Yet, Scythians entered the historical record in the 7th century B.C., when they were allies of Assyria in that century. The Cimmerians, who had lost their homeland to the Scythians, had moved south making a nuisance of themselves among the civilized people already settled in the

area such as Assyria. The horsemen, the Scythians, got on well with the Assyrians, because their leader Bartatua married an Assyrian princess in 674 B.C. Some 25 years later, Scythians again joined forces with Assyrians in destroying the Kingdom of Urartu—what is now Armenia. Scythians also took part in the conquest of Medes, whose country lay just south of the Caspian Sea (Media), what is now Iran (Tehran, the capital seems to be right in the centre of this old area). The Scythians then came to 'lording over' upper Asia, what is now modern Azerbaijan, for 28 years. They also plundered their way through Palestine right to the border of Egypt. But the Pharaoh halted their advance by buying them off. Wherever they appeared, says Herodotus, "everything was overthrown by their licentiousness and neglect." (On this, note the effect of judicial ruling in the Punjab, that recognizing their customary laws, the Jat Sikh are more lax and licentious in their sex and marital activities, so that a woman repudiated by a man was free to take another man—without any formal divorce, etc. (—a proposition completely foreign to Hindu Law or any other personal law in the country.) Continuing the history of the Scythian peoples, it seems that the Medes (Iran) having regained their strength besieged the capital of Assyria Nineveh—and this time the Scythians were fighting on the side of the Medes their old enemies. Nineveh fell to the Medes. Assyria collapsed. But the Medes had a change of heart. They had driven the Scythians out of western Asia by the turn of the century (before 6th century B.C.). Herodotus, who was in the middle of the 5th century B.C. a Greek writer and historian of antiquity compiling information for his history of the Greek and Persian Wars, visited Olbia, a Greek city on the Black Sea at the confluence of the Dnieper and Bug rivers. He recounts a legend that the king of Medes invited the Scythian chiefs to a feast, got them drunk, and killed them. The power of the Scythians thus temporarily broken, the Scythians returned to their south Russian steppe around the Black Sea. There they grew strong again, as has been earlier referred to. By 514 B.C., they were audacious enough to defy Persia's Darius the Great, when he tried to subdue the Scythians at the head of a Persian army 700,000 strong, as a prelude to his planned invasion of Greece. And it is well known, how, the Scythians, with their hit and run tactics as horse-back riders, thoroughly harassed and frustrated Darius and his mighty army, so that he had to return without ever having the opportunity to have an open pitched battle with the wily horsemen. The Afghan invader of northern India, Ahmad Shah Abdali, was plagued by the Sikhs with the same military tactics.

All these martial movements of the Scythians as a virile, reckless and



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fierce people in the course of ancient history of western Asia, which takes in Greece, Southern Russia, Armenia, Assyria, Persia, Egypt, Azerbaijan, etc., bears testimony to the character of the Sikh-Jat whose homeland, the Punjab, turns out to be the settlement of the last resort of his people from the Black Sea steppe. 'Settlement of the last resort,' perhaps. The enterprising and ever bold and dauntless spirit that seems to thrive on challenges of life seems to be at work contemporaneously. The 20th century migration of Sikh-Jats to the far flung countries of the globe is amazing indeed. Their will to succeed in the face of heavy odds, in a new, highly competitive world is even more amazing. They have settled in Singapore, Phillipines, U.S.A., Canada, U.K. and other countries in ever increasing numbers. And they have had resourcefulness enough to settle and succeed in those newer habitats in a unique show of courage, stamina and adaptability. Thus the process of their selectivity is still on. They find what they need to survive, and go after it like the devil itself. Still perhaps in a way more crude than of the western man, but just as effective and sure. Indeed, it might be said that in modern times the chief vocation of the Sikh Jat is not only agriculture and soldiering but also movement and immigration and settlement in lands hitherto unvisited.

It is an amazing fact also that whatever effect outside people or groups or society might have had on them, the Scythian tribes retained their own identity. This is a tradition still entrenched in the character of the Sikh-Jat as he continues to be imbued with a unique awareness of his own personality, regardless of the country where he is domiciled.

It is recorded that to make administration easier their entire domain, called 'Scythia' by the Greeks, was divided into four districts. A governor kept the peace in each district and saw to the collection of taxes from settled farmers of the steppe and from the lands bordering it. The district governor also supervised and encouraged trading operations in the Greek colonies along the Black Sea.

At the threat of war, the Scythians cooperated with one another in matters of recruitment and strategy. (One might add, that this is a prominent tradition manifest in the Sikh strategies of the 'MORCHA' and 'JATHAS' and 'JATHEBANDI' in current history.) The hordes of warriors raised during a crisis served without pay except for their food and clothing and a share of the booty. It is noteworthy that Sikhs have remembered to employ this tradition and strategy successfully in their fights against the British and Hindu governments of the sub-continent.

Though the Scythians gave appearance of tribal unity when it came to war with outsiders, they were not quite a nation. It seems that the

tribes fought among themselves over grasslands or cattle activity that is all too familiar and notorious among the Punjab-Jats till today.

In spite of such internal skirmishing the Scythians were united by *Custom* and a common language.

A mere sprinkling of their words survives in Herodotus. According to him :

Pata	meant	'to kill'
Spou	meant	'eye'
Arima	meant	'one'
Oior	meant	'man'

Such words are enough for philologists to say that the Scythians spoke a dialect descended from the pre-historic Indo-European language from which the major tongues of the western world have evolved.

And since theirs was a non-literate society, oral traditions, rather than written law, bound them together and perpetuated their culture--the very same striking process that has been in evidence over many centuries among the Punjab Jats.

Like many of the other nomadic tribes inhabiting the vast Eurasian steppes, the Scythians were traditionally polygamous. A wealthy Scythian could take several wives. Upon his death, a son or brother would assume them as his own. Such laxity of sexual morals has conspicuously found continuity among the Jats as their customs on this point have been commented upon and given recognition to by the tribunals pursuant to the Punjab Customary Law.

Thus their families tended to grow very large and sprawl into intricate and over-lapping clans knit together not only by common beliefs but also by complex entanglements of blood and kinship. Applying this family pattern to the Punjab's Sikh-Jats, it is proverbial that : '*Jattan dey saak tan khabbal dian tirhan* : ਜੱਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਕ ਤਾਂ ਖੱਬਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿੜ੍ਹਾਂ' (The pattern of relatives of Jats and the root-pattern of a lowspreading grass, called 'Khabbal,' is very much identical).

Moreover, Chiefs were given to taking wives from among alien people as well as their own or other Scythian tribes. This practice is still conspicuous among Sikh-Jats all over the world. This peculiar and exclusive idea of the Scythian is typical of the Sikh-Jat in the Punjab, where *Karewa* and widow remarriage have always been hallmarks of the Sikh-Jat social and connubial custom. The Jat custom of '*Muklawā*' when the newly married male goes to his in-laws to bring back his recently wedded bride, is served special sweet dishes at his in-laws, is curiously enough commemorated in the name of a Greek sweet dish, a kind of

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pastry that the Greeks call 'Baklawas.' The Greeks also have a 'Seweean' like dish that they call 'Kidaivi.' The writer has had the experience of tasting both. They are very sweet, almost approaching the standards of the Jat who has such a high appreciation of 'Shakar-Ghay' (*Shakar* being the Russian 'Sakhar' and French 'Sucker').

Same as in the Punjab we know, tribal custom was sacred to the Scythians. So it has continued with the Sikh-Jat in the Punjab. The new law givers of the Punjab, left these customs alone, well understanding obviously the origin, reality and permanence of these customs of the Scythian turned Sikh-Jat tribes. This is amply borne out by commentators like Rattigan (*Rattigan's Customary Law of the Punjab*); Mulla (*Customary Law*); Tupper, and farther back, Mayne, on Customary Law. These customary laws in force in the Punjab govern Sikh-Jats and other tribes of similar kinship in matters of succession, inheritance, marriage, adoption, and so forth. In fact, the 'Punjab Laws Act, 1872,' 24 and 25 Vict. C. 67, enacted by the Imperial Parliament, in the 24th and 25th years of the reign of Queen Victoria, by its section 5, has especially recognized that the Punjab Jats are governed by their peculiar customs—and not by any personal or religious law, such as Hindu Law. Subsequent judicial decisions in the Punjab have reiterated that Custom (*Riwaq*) is the first rule of decisions in the Punjab. Neither Hindu Law nor Mohammedan Law applied if the parties were Jat, basically speaking. Thus the Scythian (Jat) not only brought with him into the Punjab area his herds of cattle and horses but also his peculiar and ancient customs, having the force of law, which compelled others to accord respect and recognition.

As in the case of the Punjab Jat tribes, so in the case of the Scythians the tribes functioned as a kind of a melting pot. Outsiders could melt in it, but the reverse was severely frowned upon. The tribe showed its hostility to alien customs in direct ways. There was, for example, a king named Scyles. No one minded his marrying a Greek woman although he already had a Scythian wife. But then Scyles took to spending more and more time in the city of Olbia and became too fond of Greek ways, finally going so far as to take part in a riotous celebration to an alien deity, the Greek wine god : Dionysus. His Scythian relatives heard of it and a half-brother murdered him !

The same trend is inbred in the customs of the Sikh-Jat which are peculiar to his race. He would marry as often as he could afford, and he may marry any woman, of any caste or class and from any part of the world. Nothing strange about it. But rarely, if ever, would he acquiesce in a Sikh-Jat female marrying outside the tribes.

The word 'Scyth' has a striking ring to 'Sykh.' This is a refreshing coincidence, if one can leave aside for a moment the old and hackneyed explanation that 'Sikh' is supposed to be derived from Sanskrit 'Shishia,' etc., meaning a disciple.

Then again, blood of ten flowed freely in Scythian rituals. The neophyte warrior was expected to drink some of the blood of his first fallen foe. It is a noteworthy fact that in the Punjab even now the Sikh-Jat expression is still used: 'Lahoo Peena' ਲਹੂ ਪੀਣਾ (drinking blood) to denote the aggressor oppressing the other who is down.

Parties to an alliance would seal their pact with a blood oath, letting their blood into a bowl of wine, dipping their knives or javelins or other weapons into it, and drinking the mix. This Scythian custom is typified in the method of preparation and the administration of the Sikh baptismal potion: 'Amrit' ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ, which is made of sweetened water stirred with a sharp double-edged 'Khanda' ਖੰਡਾ (a Sikh style weapon). It seals the oath and determination to abide by the new disciplines of the 'neophyte' Singh or Khalsa (Sikh).

One prisoner of each hundred taken in battle was given to a 'god of war,' represented by an iron sword planted atop a mound of brushwood. This again bears a characteristic parallel to the significance and importance of the iron sword in the Sikh (Khalsa) religion. The sword is designated as *Sri Bhagauti Ji* by the tenth Guru, *Sahib Sri* Guru Gobind Singh Ji. In the composition called 'Chandi Ki Var' (The Chandi Ode), the Tenth Guru has concentrated on the supreme powers and overriding efficacies of the iron sword, the seat of power of the last resort that rips asunder the evil forces. So much so that the Sikh litany emphatically starts out by first invoking the 'Bhagauti Ji' (iron sword)—which some scholars would, depending on their personal persuasions, say is symbolic of man's perennial consciousness derived from the creator, or his power to 'discern' like the quality of a 'laser beam' that transcends ordinary intellect and reason.

In the Sikh litany thus the iron sword symbolizes the energizing force: The Sikh litany (*Ardas*) begins thus:

ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ ॥ ਸਿਰੀ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ॥

ਵਾਹ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੴ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮਿ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਕੇ...

*Ek Onkar, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh, Sri Bhagauti Ji Sahai, Var Sri Bhagauti Ji ki, Patshahi Daswin; Prithme Bhagauti Simr ke...*

Thus the emphasize is laid on *Sri Bhagauti Ji* in the aforementioned context.

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Other than the mound of brush with symbolic sword, the Scythians had no temples or altars or religious images and, evidently no priests as such—all of which, it is remarkable to note is of the essence of Sikh religion and its patent mark. The Sikh religion has no images, no priests, no altars, and the worship of the followers of Sri Guru Gobind Singh is through and through, iconoclast. Did our saviour, the Tenth Master, already know the root predispositions of his flock? The Sikh church, in any case, is a living example of the old Scythian styles and ideas of worship.

Soothsayers, however, abounded among the Scythian people; and included in their ranks eunuchoid or effeminate males called 'enarees'—a word that meant 'men-women' or 'half-men.'

The word or expression 'enaree' ਅਨਾਰੀ can be easily distinguished in the Punjabi vernacular spoken amongst Sikh-Jats. It means 'imperfect person.' On the one hand, it could mean an 'imperfect' woman or female, if the idea of 'naar' or lady is at the bottom of the expression. On the other hand, 'enaree' ਅਨਾਰੀ could well refer to the 'imperfect' or 'inexperienced' or 'un-familiar' person, in both cases, allegorically meaning a eunuch.

Some soothsayers foretold the future with willow wands, 'danda' in Punjabi : ਡੰਡਾ, that they positioned on the ground. They were much feared because they had the power to execute tribal law. For instance, it appears, that the thoughts of men were held to have enough force to cause the sickness of a chief.

Scythian women travelled in carts or wagons instead of on horseback. Such still obviously is the custom among Punjab-Jat women folk who are in a preferred category for a ride on the cart or transport, a 'Gadda.'

To spare their women drudgery, the Scythians kept captives of wars as slaves. These they would often blind, and assign to the milking of mares, and the churning of Kumiss.

Herodotus relates a legend how once, when the Scythian warriors were long absent from home, their women took the slaves to bed and spawned a new generation that the warriors had to defeat on their return. After much struggle with these interlopers, the Scythians laid down their weapons and took up their horse whips. 'So long as they see us with arms in our hands; one of them said, 'they imagine themselves our equals in birth and bravery. But let them behold us with no other weapon but the whip and they will feel they are our slaves, and flee before us.' The strategy worked, and the slaves were so astounded that they forgot the fight and immediately ran away.

Now, those, who are familiar with the Punjab settlements and villages, can readily see that in almost every village of Jat-Sikh agriculturists or

land-cultivators there is the ubiquitous 'Chamahrlee', *Chamar*-colony: चमहारली, as an essential adjunct to the principal denizens of the village. These are the Chamars, the families of the menial-class almost the hereditary servants of the Sikh-Jat, to assist him in his field, animal-husbandry and other agrarian pursuits.

These Chamars in the Sikh-Jat villages in the Punjab do represent the remnant of the ancient slaves of the Scythian tribes. Their identification in this respect is self-suggesting. They have moved with the Jat tribes, and settled in each instance where the Jat tribe settled in a certain village. The Chamar family is hereditary helper of the particular Jat family : so that one Chamar family is attached in the menial capacity to one or certain Jat family, whereas another is similarly indentured to another Sikh-Jat family to render service. The Chamars thus represent the traditional servants of the Sikh-Jat, or the Scythian tribes of old. And they perform identical work as in the past. They are, over the centuries now, not literally the 'slaves' but definitely 'the *Kamay* (helpers) of their overlords. They go where the overlord goes.

The 'Kamay' or Chamars of the Sikh-Jat may be the performers of menial type of service, but they are certainly not treated as 'the Untouchables' as known to the Hindu society. They are the partakers of the food of the Jat, and of his drink, and often the sharers of his joy and grief. They help in times of rejoicing as well in time of mourning. They are sad at the loss of a Jat member and are equally benefitted by their master's, bounty at times of wedding and other personal victories. Their relationship to the Jat master is a personal one, and a continuing and permanent one. It runs in families. They are not the aboriginies of the Punjab or the Dravidians so to speak. They are the hereditary servants of Sikh-Jat tribes and families, and have come with them.

The physiognomy of our Chamars tells strongly of their identity of race with the Sikh-Jat. They were also originally of Scythian origin and have descended from the old slave tribes taken by the dominant Scythian tribes. The body build, the facial appearance and cut, and the Caucasian features as well as the comparative lighter skin colour of the Chamar families and specimens thereof strongly suggest that they are derived from the same Indo-Scythian stock that the Sikh-Jat is descended from. The only difference is in their position in relation to one another : same as it was between the captor and the captures in the Scythian homelands around the north and east of the Black Sea, and in between there and northern-western Indian plains, all the geographical areas that the Scythian invaders have traversed in finding their way to the Sindh valley and

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the Punjab valleys.

The Chamars thus attached to Sikh-Jat families of the Punjab are thus a part and parcel of the village society to which the Sikh-Jat belongs. As earlier pointed out, the coexistence of a 'Chamahree' (Chamar mini-colony) on the fringes of the Sikh-Jat habitations is poignantly evocative of the master-slave relationship that existed between the ancient Scythians and the captives. The migrations have preserved this relationship. The eventual establishment of the Jats in the Punjab and the evolution of an economic and social system has so evolved as to preserve this relationship. So that, the Chamar is always available to render service to the Jat, and often moves with him to the latter's new sites and ventures. The Chamars, in this behalf, have helped the Jat to colonize the Bar colony lands when those first opened up in western Punjab with the advent of the railway and canals. Many Chamars rendered service to the Sikh-Jats and went to the bar-colony, to settle on the land-squares, 'Murabbay' ਮੁਰਾਬੈ. To be excused for a personal reminiscence, the writer can say that in the writer's family alone three generations at least, to my personal knowledge, have continuously been Chamar helpers of my family, from father to son and onwards, on both sides, and they did indeed help in cultivating and managing the lands in the bar in this case also. I am sure there are innumerable similar cases all over the land the Sikh-Jats occupy.

The Chamar class, men and women, continue to play a prominent role in the life of the Sikh-Jat families. They are the Jat's traditional 'Kamay' or serfs, who help harvest the crops, thresh and winnow the corn and wheat, hoe the growing sugar-cane, pick cotton, milk cows and buffaloes, tend the cattle, run errands and do family shopping for Jat ladies and perform as personal messengers of the Jat household. Such intimate relation to the Jat has also led to interesting interactions of the Jat whose promiscuous proclivity toward Chamar females has come to be told in village folklore of the Jat society. The Sikh-Jat certainly does not regard the Chamar helper as a 'Sudra' of Hindu terminology. In fact, the Sikh-Jat, proverbially, does not discriminate between a Brahmani and a Chamaree female as far as his own masculine urges are of relevance. No wonder that the Sikh-Jat does not appear to give a damn if the Brahmanical Hindu system dubs the Jat as a 'Sudra'. To him there is hardly much difference between a Brahmin and a Chamar since by habit and history the Sikh-Jat is concerned with the practical realities of life and is not disposed to waste time on theories.

Above all, there is living proof, in the psychology of the Chamar vis-a-vis the Sikh-Jat tribes. This self-consciousness of the inferior personal

status of the Chamar amply corroborates the basis of the legend recorded by Herodotus. The deferential demeanour and attitude of the Chamar toward the Sikh-Jat notwithstanding an equal measure of physique and health and intelligence, highlights the psyche of the former slave. It was this self-consciousness of the inferior status of the transgressing slaves which, in the story told by Herodotus, forced them back into line and prevented their competing with their masters.

The Scythians' extravagant rites of death and mourning provide another important strong link in their identification with stock, represented by the Sikh-Jats, found in the Punjab area. One can observe a striking and deep rooted similarity between the modes of mourning a death among Punjab village Sikh-Jats and the protracted and exaggerated expressions of the grief and mourning exhibited by the Scythians.

Death of a common warrior entailed among the Scythians a period of pre-burial mourning and feasting during which the embalmed corpse was hauled by wagon, drawn by oxen, among the friends of the deceased. But at the death of a king all Scythian tribes joined in a show of stupendous grief that lasted 40 days. Men of the dominant tribe, the Royal Scythians, would cut off their own hair, lacerate their own ears, foreheads, noses and arms and stick arrows through their left hands. These mutilations would be matched by other tribesmen as the King's body-stuffed with a preparation of chopped cypress, frankincense ('Jowain' : ਜਵੈਣ) barley seed and anise seed ('Sonf' ਸੌਂਫ) — was hauled from tribe to tribe toward the burial place in an ever increasing procession. Though, over the centuries the ancient burial has been substituted by cremation, probably borrowed by example from other wandering Aryan tribes, especially when the fixed homeland was no more. The Scythian and Jat style of mourning bears very close proximity in the idea and intensity behind its show. After reaching the burial site, to which the queens or concubines had trekked on foot following the wagon bearing the corpse of their departed Lord, the funeral party would strangle one of his concubines, his cup bearer ('Garwai' ਗੜਵੈਯਈ), his cook, his lackey, his messenger, and his best horses—and place all the bodies by him. After finishing the burial, they would erect small tents in which they purified themselves, in the heady vapours given off by smouldering hemp seeds ('Bhang' ਭੈਂਗ) scattered over red hot stones or rocks. Even then the funeral was not always over. One year later more servants of the King might be strangled, embalmed and pierced lengthwise with a stake so that they could be set astride an equal number of embalmed and impaled horses arranged in a circle around the new royal tomb.



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The most recent and memorable funeral of a Sikh-Jat (Scythian) King in recent history might well be that of the Lion of the Punjab, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, the sovereign king of the Sikh kingdom, who died in June 1839, at the Fort at Lahore, now Pakistani Punjab. The death and funeral rites as described in Sohan Lal's *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* and quoted in, *The Real Ranjit Singh* by Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-Din are reminiscent of the funerals among the Royal Scythians. The 'Sankalp' (ceremonial offerings) in the case of Maharajah Ranjit Singh's death-event are the latest version of the strangling and burial of the Scythian King's wives, servants, horses, etc. It is recorded that first on 22 June, 1839, when Ranjit Singh appeared sinking, an offering of 100 horses with gold and silver harnesses and brocade, velvet and embroidered trappings and saddle-cloth and, 500 cows, was to be performed. Again, on 23 June, 1839, the Maharajah 'performed a *Sankalp* of horses, elephants and 5 gold vessels, cups, jugs, etc., and 51,000 rupees.' Before breathing his last on 27th June, 1839, the previous day, 'The Sarkar (Maharajah Ranjit Singh) had the honour and pride of enjoying the sacred sight of the *Adi Granth* and *Baba Granth* (the Sikh Scriptures) and made a prostration before them; then a few hours later, eight lakhs of rupees, his special conveyance, elephants with gold and silver howdahs and horses with gold and silver trappings were given away by the king. Thereafter, 'the Sarkar undid the weapons from his waist and handed them over to the servants with the words that... the last moment had drawn near.'

Though no queens or servants of the Royal Sikh King in 1839 were strangled after his death to 'remain with the stirr up of the Sarker (Ranjit Singh),' the fact stands out boldly that, in keeping with the Scythian traditions and customs on like occasion, the Chief Minister, Dhian Singh, was supposed and expected to follow the king by going into the pyre that would burn the Royal person. He was dissuaded only by the frantic urging of the surviving Royal successor, Kharak Singh, son of the deceased King.

Nevertheless, four favourite *Ranis* (queens) of Maharajah Ranjit Singh perished with him on his burning pyre, after following his bier on foot, dressed in their bridal costumes and jewellery in the typical Scythian tradition set by their counterparts of old. "Then the four queens led by Kattochan (Maharani Guddan, the beautiful daughter of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra) walked up to the pyre. Rani Kattochan seated herself in the middle of the pyre with the Maharaja's head in her lap. The other three *ranis* seated themselves round her, with seven maidservants forming an outer circle." The pyre was then lit, and thus all *Ranis* and the seven maid-servants, of the Sikh-Jat King thus stayed with him in his death as

they had in his life.

And the same idea and spirit of the Scythian expression has imbued the mourning among ordinary folk of the Punjab village. At least, until fifty years ago, one can remember this Scythian style of mourning among the Jat relatives following the death of a 'head' of a family. Womenfolk, among Sikh-Jats, particularly have been responsible for re-enacting the dramatized style of the Scythian mourning. Following the death of a persona grata, processions of wailing Jat women, from outside points, keep verging on the village of the deceased for many days, forty or more. For days on end these 'Mukanan' (ਮੁਕਾਨਾ) keep coming in concert, orchestrating, as it were an exaggerated sense of grief at the passing of the kin. The Jat women, forming a mourning party, assemble outside the village visited. A black 'Ghagra' the familiar black, swirling skirt of European women, is carried by almost all of these women on their arms, if they are not already in it, and upon entry to the village precincts they get into the 'Ghagra.' Then the group wends through the village, wailing and screaming, flopping their arms about them and beating their bosoms. Once inside the house they are visiting, the exercise in vocal and athletic mourning continues with marked accentuation. Usually the half-dozen female participants then form a circle or semi-circle, standing in the inner compound or court-yard of the house. A female, as a sort of mourning conductor or leader, who is often the local 'Jheeree' (water-woman) or perhaps the 'Nein' (Barber-ess) then conducts the mourners into a regular, steadier exercise of raising their arms and bringing them down to beat upon their bosoms or lifting their hands to slap their cheeks in unison. The 'caller' (it is not meant the 'caller' in square-dancing in America) at the same time verbalizes in a kind of blank verse during this athletic progression the memories and achievements of the deceased ; for instance, the sizable number of fields he owned, irrigation-wells, his houses, or 'havelis', his servants, his orchards, horses, cattle, the sons and grandsons he has left, his past deeds of prowess, his weapons and implements, and the like. This might go on for half an hour or longer. Then the shrieking and violent self-beating slackens gradually. It subsides even further, and blends into sobbing and occasional scream pattern. They sit down then. In a little more time, and sobering up a little, they are eventually offered cool or hot refreshments by the host family's ladies. The old Scythian un-forgettable mourning style and idea thus seemingly survives in this unique custom of mourning among the Sikh-Jat Punjab women and their families. It depicts the original delirious spirit and a social dramatization of the sympathy and condolence on the part of the

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friends and relatives of the departed man.

For all his detailed accounts of Scythian customs, Herodotus declares that they were 'not such as I admire.' But there was one custom in which the Scythians seemed to Herodotus, 'wiser than any nation upon the face of the earth': their way of war, and especially the wily way in which they handled Darius the Great of Persia when he came conquering the Scythians' homelands, as a prelude to his invasion of Greece, about 514 B. C. The Scythians settled on an evasive strategy and handled Darius and his huge hordes in a vast circuitous encounter that took Darius all over their land without an open fight, until Darius was exhausted and despairing returned without meeting the Scythian riders head on at any time. The Sikh-Jat horsemen seemed to have remembered the old tricks learned long ago. They employed the same warfare strategy in dealing with the forces of Ahmad Shah Adbali each time he invaded the Punjab in the 18th century A. D. Such was their lightning type attack and retreat that the invader each time was left bewildered without having the opportunity to meet the Sikh Khalsa horsemen who stalked his army moving into or out of the Punjab. He is said to have asked the local governor where were these men from, where was their home? And he was told that their home was in the saddle of the horses they rode. 'Watch them (or beware of them)' the Afghan invader admonished his Viceroy.\* The Adbali apparently could foretell the potential beginnings of the Sikh Kingdom in these Khalsa free troops of the horse, who were masters in the art of lightning attack and swoop, and their clean, quiet and swift disappearance following such attack, before the enemy could retaliate.

The Scythians prevailed on the South Russian steppe. They outlasted not only Darius but the Persian Empire itself. In the 4th century B. C. they expanded west-ward until Phillip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, drove them back from the Danube. The Scythians killed Zephyrion, the Thracian governor of Alexander (of Thrace, kingdoms west of Scythian territory), and routed his troops and set up outposts in the Balkans—before returning home to the steppe.

It seems probable and likely, that the Scythian; ancestors of the Sikh-Jat, entered the Sind valley first, from Seistan area of Iran and the Helmand Desert area of southern-most Afghanistan in or about the 1st century BC and 1st century AD. There is a township by the name of 'jat poti' in this southern desert of Afghanistan close to the borders

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\* Actually this warning was given by Nadir Shah to Zakariya Khan of Lahore.

—Editor.

with India (Pakistan, Baluchistan). This is close to Quetta and the Bolan pass. A look at the map shows Bolan pass, allowing a natural passage between the Hindukush ranges on north-east and Kirthar ranges on the south-west, and broadening into a flat or plain landscape corridor starting where Sibi is located just below Quetta. And this corridor then takes one into the Sind river valley further east, into the old Punjab.

Sir Denzil Charles J. Ibbetson's celebrated work at the turn of the century and his remarks about the homeland of the Jat ancestors which he mentions as being on the 'Oxus river' (now Amu Darya, in Russian Turkmenistan) was rendered almost a century ago. At least, a long time before the contemporary archeological finds discovered in Crimea and Ukraine, some of those just about 6 years ago, in 1971.

It further appears from the testimony of old records among Sikh-Jat families themselves, that having moved into the southern and central Punjab, from the Sind valley, there has been a further natural movement of these people from central Punjab, for instance, into the Doaba area or east Punjab. I advert to the observations of first, Sir Denzil, and then I will refer to personal correspondence received by me from Sir Evan Jenkins, the last British Governor of the Punjab, on this subject of Jat ancestry, before I finally quote from an auto-biographic document filed by the writer's father, in 1923, with the Nabha Foreign Office.

1. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I., in his Report on the Census of Punjab, first published in 1883, commenting on the ethnology of the Punjab peoples points out that no subject has received so much comment and discussion as the origin of the Jat peoples in the Punjab. He continues :

"Suffice it to say that both General Cunningham and Major Todd agree in considering the Jats to be of Indo-Scythian stock. The former (Cunningham) identifies them with the Zanthii of Strabo (a Greek poet, philosopher, historian), and the *Jatu* of Pliny and Ptolemy (Alexandrine astronomer of 2nd century), and holds that they probably entered the Punjab from their home on the Oxus very shortly after the Meds or Mands, who also were Indo-Scythians, and who moved into the Punjab about a century before Christ. The Jats seem to have first occupied the Indus valley, as far down as Sindh, whither the Meds followed them about the beginning of the present era. But before the earliest Mahomedan invasions the Jat had spread into the Punjab proper where they were firmly established in the beginning of the 11th century. ...

"As early as the 7th century the Jats and Meds of Sindh were ruled over by a Brahmin dynasty.

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"Major Todd classes the Jats as one of great Rajput tribes and extends his identification with the *Getae* to both races; but here General Cunningham differs, holding the Rajputs to belong to the original Aryan stock, and the Jats to belong to a later wave of immigrants from the North-west, probably of Scythian race."

Sir Denzil Ibbetson refers to the arguments that have been adduced and are found in detail in certain works, as to the origin of the Jat race. He mentions the following sources :

1. Archaeological Survey Reports, Vol. II, pp. 51-61;
  2. Todd's *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, pp. 52-75 and 96-101 (Madras, Reprint, 1880);
  3. Elphinstone's *History of India*, pp. 250-253;
  4. Elliot's '*Races of the NWP*', Vol. I, pp. 130-137.
2. Sir Evan M. Jenkins, ICS, KCSI, until the independence of India the British Governor of the Punjab, in a letter to the writer written in 1956, from Sir Evan's retirement in London, thus wrote :

'I don't think anyone really knows, or will ever know, where the Jats came from. Your father used to toy with the idea that they were the same as the Jutes (Jutland) who were among the early invaders of Kent ; others have suggested that they are the *Getae*; and there are the theories you mention. In hard fact, if you go back beyond written records you get lost unless there is evidence that archaeologists<sup>3</sup> can use. Thus in this county we know a little (not very much) about the Roman occupation; what happened before and for some time after it is very obscure. The invading ancestors of the Jats don't seem to have left much in the way of ancient buildings, pottery, etc., and there is probably even less evidence in the Punjab than there is here of the early settlements. The Jats are obviously Aryan, speaking an Indo-European language and that I think is all one can say. But I am not a scholar in these matters.

3. In a personal biography dated 22 May, 1923, filed with the Foreign Minister of Nabha State, my later father<sup>4</sup> thus recorded :

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3. The archaeological discovery of the pottery and jewellery, etc., in 1971, and in the previous decade, in the tombs in Ukraine, and Crimea amply brings forth evidence of the identity of Jats as of Scythian race, and this evidence is subsequent to the date of the letter of Sir Evan.

4. Har Bakhsh Singh, Bar-at-Law, Judge of the High Court and President of the Judicial Council, Nabha, and later MLC, and Deputy President, Punjab Legislative Council, Senior Vice-Chairman District Board, Hoshiarpur, etc., deceased January 1931. He was the eldest son of (late) Sardar Bahadur Sardar Gulab Singh, District Judge, of Hoshiarpur, deceased March 1911.

"As desired, I give the following as a brief account of my family and myself and my service in Nabha State :

"I am a Sikh Jat of the Sarao *Got*. My forefathers came from central Punjab with Sardar Gurbaksh Singh of Kalsia and settled down at Bambeli in the Hoshiarpur District, which was then wrested from Dinabeg (vide Revenue Papers and Col. Massy, *Punjab Chiefs*. Later on, Kalsia Sardars moved on to their present day estates in Ambala District, but my forefathers stuck to their place and holdings in Bambeli, which is now our home. My house now stands at the site of the 'haveli' of the Kalsia Sardars in the village of Bambeli. With the advent of the British rule my great-grand-father, Choudhri Phula Singh, was appointed an 'allah' Lambardar of Bambeli and at present my first cousin is a Lambardar in the village..."

To conclude, such were the Scythians, the acknowledged ancestors of the present Sikh-Jats<sup>5</sup> that it has been said of them :

"A proud, self-willed people ready to extort from others what they needed to survive; they may have led (as stock breeders under the open sky, and the first horse tamers) far more peaceful lives among themselves than history has allowed." And it can be said with equal consistency that the Punjab Sikh-Jat is (as Sir Denzil Ibbetson holds) basically a peaceful and peace-loving soul, who wants to be left alone, and in animal husbandry none excels him."

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5. It appears, as Syed Mohd Latif, in his 'History of the Punjab' mentions, that the *Tarkhans* are also of Jat origion. When 5 jar brothers took to carpentering work, and set up their trade in the Anarkali, in Lahore city it thus laid the beginnings of the Ramgrahia Misl to which the Tarkhans affiliate themselves. Probably 'Sainies,' and some other half-distinct groups in the Punjab, are also of the original Jat class, and thus of the same stock as the Scythian people. They have, by assuming un-conventional occupations, deviated from the main group that has remained distinct as landowner and land cultivator and husband man, as the Jat typically is. Now some non-Jats theorize that that the Jat themselves are 'Khat-ries.' For one thing our Gurus were born in 'Khatries' families, and it is supposed to have rubbed off on the Sikh-Jats. Considering that jurists like Sir Shadi Lal held that Jats were to be regarded *Sudras*, this is a distinct social promotion for the Sikh-Jat in the dispensations of the Brahmanical hierarchy. On the other hand, even Guru Nanak was a cultivator at Kartarpur till the end ! And similes between a God-aliented life and a parched, rain, thirsty crop field, in the *Guru Granth Sahib* are innumerable.

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## Admission and Readmission to Hinduism During the Medieval Period

PROF. SRI RAM SHARMA

It used to be the common belief even among students of history that Hindus never admitted people belonging to other religions to their fold. But a more careful study of our sources has now changed that view and it is no longer fashionable to think of Hinduism as a religion wherein only those had a place who were born into it. Most of the evidence from the Hindu period in this connection was brought together by Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar in his article on *Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population*<sup>1</sup> and those interested in the subject may turn to its pages for fuller information.

But it is still commonly held that admission of non-Hindus to Hinduism stopped with the advent of the Muslims in this country. The following pages make an attempt at investigating the problem from the pages of Muslim chronicles, intent more upon recording the victories of their co-religionists than the conversions of non-Hindus to the Hindu fold. They were not at all interested in this question and when we get some light shed upon this aspect of affairs it is but accidental. Another thing must be remembered in this connection. Under Islamic Law the conversion of Muslims to other faiths was a capital crime.<sup>2</sup> One has, therefore, to appreciate the courage of those Hindus who tried to convert Muslims to their own faith. Even the reconversion of converted Hindus from Islam was a crime and thus if we do not find any great movement for the conversion or reconversion of non-Hindus to the Hindu fold we should not be very much surprised. We should hold these artificial barriers created by the Muslim law responsible for this state of things rather than hold Hinduism responsible for its being forced to shut its doors to non-Hindus.

But the surprising thing is that even under these adverse conditions we do find recorded examples of conversions of non-Hindus to the Hindu fold and of the reconversion of the Hindus to their old religion after they

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1. *Indian Antiquary*, 1911, pp. 7 to 37.

2. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, pp. 181 to 185. Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; and Zwemer, *Apostacy in Islam*.



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had once accepted Islam. The cases recorded by Muslim chroniclers are no doubt few and far between, but they make for the belief that a larger number of cases might have occurred which these annalists did not try to record. Anyway, it is no longer possible to believe in the face of the instances quoted below that Hinduism had exhausted its proselytizing energy before the advent of the Muslims in India.

1. The Arabs conquered Sind in 712 A.D. Under Caliph Umar II (717 to 724 A.D.) many Hindus in Sind were converted to Islam. But when under Caliph Hishām (724 to 743 A.D.), Tamīm was the Governor of Sind, many of these Hindu converts to Islam were reconverted and admitted into the Hindu fold.<sup>3</sup> We have no details of these conversions, the Arab chronicler of the early conquests of Islam, Al-Biladūrī, is content to record the fact that Tamīm's successor, Hakim, found that the people of India, except those of Kassa, had returned to idolatry. This could have happened only if there was no bias among the Hindus at this time against the reconversion of their co-religionists who had given up their religion in favour of Islam.

2. But the Hindus in Sind were not simply content with welcoming their erstwhile Hindu brethren alone. They converted many—how many we have no means of estimating—Muslims as well to their faith about this time. 'After the recall of Muhammad bin Qasim,' says Sir Denison Ross, 'the Muslims retained some foothold on the west bands of the river Indus, the rest gradually merged into the Hindu population. In Mansura (the capital of Sind) they actually adopted Hinduism.' Under Hakim the Muslims retreated from Sind as "they had no place of security in which they could take refuge." He built a town on the other side of the sea facing India. 'This he made a place of refuge and security for them and gave it the name of Al-Mansura, the secure.'<sup>4</sup> We can well imagine what must have happened. When the retreat was ordered many of them may have either been left behind or cut off from the main army. Naturally they had to make the best of their position. Cut off from their co-religionists they could not, so they may have argued, exist in security. Their only salvation, it must have appeared to them, lay in their absorption into the Hindu population among whom they were dwelling. Contrary to popular belief the Hindus must have been prepared to welcome them in their midst and thus they were converted to the Hindu fold. They were admitted into Hinduism no doubt

3. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 126.

4. *Islam*, p. 18.

and the Hindu population received a Muslim element.

3. A Muslim friend of mine, the learned editor of the *Urdu Encyclopaedia*, was some years ago called in for the purpose of giving literary form to the history of an important Muslim family in the district of Rawalpindi in the Punjab (Pakistan). While there he examined the genealogical tree of another old and influential family of Raja Sultan Khan Dond of Ghoragali. The tree goes considerably back to the beginning of the eleventh century. My Muslim friend was surprised to find in that tree three Hindu names that were to be referred, according to the family tradition, to about the middle of the eleventh century. There are Muslim names at first; then about this time come Hindu names of two or three generations which are again followed by Muslim names. My friend was told that the probable explanation of these ancestors of the family having Hindu names was that they served some Hindu chief who conferred on them these Hindu titles. I think the reasonable explanation is that, as we saw above, these ancestors of theirs were converted to Hinduism from Islam.

4. The Kalabagh branch of the Awans of the Salt Range was 'till recently the chief family of the tribe.' They traced their descent to Qutb Shah of Ghazni. 'In the genealogical tree of the family several Hindu names are found just after the name of Qutb Shah.' Naturally his descendants must have been converted to Hinduism and professed it for some generations. Later on, the chiefs were again converted to Islam.<sup>5</sup>

5. When we turn to Mahmud's expeditions to India, we find history repeating itself. When Subuktgīn defeated Jaipāl in 986-87 A.D., the latter surrendered certain hostages to Subuktgīn. One of them was Jaipāl's grandson Sukhpāl.<sup>6</sup> Subuktgīn made no attempt to convert him. Sukhpāl accompanied him in his expedition to Nishapur in 994 A.D. and remained there with Mahmud. In April 995, Abul Alī expelled Mahmud from Nishapur and it was probably at this time that Sukhpāl fell into the hands of Abul Alī who converted him to Islam. In 996 Abul Alī was taken prisoner. This or the subsequent death of Abul Alī in 997 A.D., provided Sukhpāl, now a Muslim, the chance of re-entering Mahmud's service where he soon rose to eminence. In 1006 A.D. he accompanied Mahmūd on his expedition to India against Dāūd of Multan and was appointed warden of the marches when Dāūd fled

5. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 170.

6. Firishṭa, *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭa*, 26; Alberuni, *India*, II, 131.

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away.<sup>7</sup> Hardly a year had passed when Sukhpāl gave up his new faith and was reconverted to Hinduism. This news reached Mahmūd after January 5, 1008, in Khurasan and he hastened to India to meet this new danger.<sup>8</sup> Sukhpāl was defeated, a heavy fine was extorted from him, and he was imprisoned.<sup>9</sup> But he did not give up his Hindu religion. *Adab-ul-Maluk* of Mohammad written early in the thirteenth century has it that he escaped from prison and after the death of Masūd,<sup>10</sup> Sukhpāl formed a confederacy of the Hindu Rajas of Southern Kashmir and attacked the Ghaznavids at Lahore. He was defeated and slain in the battle.

Now Sukhpāl's mere lapse into Hinduism would never have made him such a danger as he is represented to be if his conversion to Hinduism had not been accepted by his contemporary co-religionists. All contemporary or semi-contemporary accounts of Mahmūd's reign are agreed in representing his readmission into the Hindu fold as a great challenge to Mahmūd's power. His reconversion, therefore, must have been accepted by the contemporary Hindus. It may have possibly been accompanied by the reconversion of a large number of Hindu converts to Islam to constitute a danger to Mahmūd.

6. Our next example of the absorption of the Muslim population among the neighbouring Hindus comes from the south. Commercial relations between Arabia and India had been established at an early date and some of the Muslim traders or their followers seem to have settled in the districts bordering on the Arabian Sea. One such group of isolated settlers lived in Madurai early in the fourteenth century and was absorbed among the Hindus. When Malik Kāfūr attacked Madurai under its ruler Ravivarman in 1311, he fled away to Kadur. Malik Kāfūr followed him there and ordered a general massacre after capturing the city. Here he met with those Muslim settlers—or descendants of early Muslim settlers—who had almost been absorbed among the Hindus and who on that account very nearly lost their lives along with the Hindu inhabitants. But, fortunately for them, some of them succeeded in repeating the *Kalima*, the Muslim creed, and were then spared.<sup>11</sup>

7. The conversion of Husain Khan who occupied the throne of

7. 'Utbi, *Tārīkh-i-Yamīni*, translated in *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, Sri Ram Sharma, 43.

8. Utbi declares that he had reached an understanding with Hindu leaders with a view to his untying the collar of faith and severing its strong cords. *Studies*, 49.

9. Girdizi, *Zainul Akhbar*, 69; Firishia, 25, 26, 'Utbi translated in *Studies*, 43, 44.

10. *Adāb-ul-Maluk*, 27-b cited by Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud* in note 1 on page 99.

11. Khusru in *Khazāin-ul-Fatuh* (English translation by Habib), 99.

Delhi as Nāsir-ud-Dīn Khusrū Shāh from April 1320 to July 1320 has not received the attention of historians very much. His short reign has been usually dismissed as that of an outcaste Hindu convert to Islam who got the opportunity to murder his master and predecessor on account of Mubārak's homosexual attachment to Husain. But to begin with he was not a low-caste Hindu, much less one belonging to the scavenger class of outcastes.<sup>12</sup> Briggs in translating Firishta described him as member of an outcaste who were not allowed to build houses within the town,<sup>13</sup> even though his original text squarely described his caste as pursuing wrestling as its profession.<sup>14</sup> This was taken up by Elphinstone in his *History of India*<sup>15</sup> and from there it passed on to text-books and popular histories<sup>16</sup> so much so that even the *Cambridge History of India*<sup>17</sup> speaks of him as 'a wretch' and 'a vile wretch.' The publication of the contemporary *Tughlaq Nāmā* should have given the final quietus to the story. Amir Khusrū describes Baradau, the caste to which Husain belonged, as providing bodyguard to chief and nobles, devoted to their masters and brave on their behalf.<sup>18</sup>

Husain was made a prisoner during Alāuddin's expedition to Malwa in 1305.<sup>19</sup> He must have been still very young and was brought up in the household of Malik Shādī in Delhi.<sup>20</sup> We know nothing about him during the ten years that followed. But when Mubārak became the ruler of Delhi, Husain rose to high eminence on account of Mubārak's homosexual passion for him.<sup>21</sup> But it is difficult to believe that unbridled passion of Mubārak alone would have made it possible for Husain to rise to the eminence which he reached. Mubārak conferred on him the jagirs and the status of Malik-Kafūr<sup>22</sup> who had kept Mubārak out of his rightful claim to the throne and who had been an object of similar passion for

12. Barni, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, 381.

13. *Rise of the Muhammedan Power in India*, I, 387; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, II.

14. Firishta, 124.

15. Ibid., page 392, note 19 (Ninth Edition).

16. Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India*, 282.

17. *Cambridge History of India*, III, 120.

18. *Tughlaq Nama*, 19, Dr Saxena in Vol. V, 431, of the *Comprehensive History of India* recognizes the fact that Khusrū was a caste Hindu. He relies on Barni for his account of Khusrū.

19. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, Yahya, 85, *Dawal Rani*, Amir Khusrū, 68.

20. Firishta, 124.

21. Barni, 381; Firishta, 124.

22. Ibid., Barni.

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'Alāuddīn.<sup>23</sup> But with Khusrū Khān as his Vazir, Mubārak was greatly successful in bringing about a peaceful revolution at Delhi, putting an end to such totalitarian measures of Alāuddīn as had still survived, but preserving not only law and order in his dominions but also contributing to the prosperity of the country.<sup>24</sup>

Khusrū Khān invited a very large number of his kinsmen to join him at Delhi. Thirty thousand of them seem to have taken service under his brother, Hisāmuddīn who became Governor of Gujrat.<sup>25</sup>

Khusrū Khān soon created an opportunity for filling the place with his kinsmen and on 14 April, 1320, he was successful in murdering Mubārak and ascended the throne on 15 April, 1320, as Nāsiruddīn Khusrū Shāh.<sup>26</sup>

With his homosexual tormentor gone, the new king reverted to Hinduism. 'Idol worship began in the palace. Idols were placed in niches. He desired that the powers and importance of Hindus should increase, Hindus rejoiced that Delhi has come under Hindu rule.'<sup>27</sup> Because Barnī adds that *the Quran* was dishonoured in the palace,<sup>28</sup> attempts have been made to discredit the kernel of this story, the emergence of Hindu occupant of the throne of Delhi at this time and the going back to their faith of a very large number of recently-converted half-baked Muslims. It is forgotten that Barnī is not alone in describing the revolution that had taken place at Delhi. 'Isāmī declared that Islam stood defeated under him.'<sup>29</sup> To dismiss Barnī's specific statements as contradicting both reason and evidence<sup>30</sup> without explaining why the succeeding generations of historians believed and reproduced them is to fly in the face of evidence.<sup>31</sup> The statements do not redound to the credit of Islam and Barnī could have no reason to invent them. Simply because Barnī does not specifically state that the new ruler had gone back to his old faith, it is unreasonable to believe that Nāsiruddīn desired to be considered a normal Muslim king<sup>32</sup> whose name was included in the Friday prayers and whose coins

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23. Barnī, 331.

24. Barnī, 382, 383-385; Isāmī, *Fatūhusalātīn*, 346-360.

25. Firishṭa, 126; Barnī, 402.

26. *Tughlaq Nāma*, 22-26, 47, 50-51; Barnī, 408; Yahyā, 87, 91; Isāmī, 365.

27. Barnī, 407-412.

28. Barnī, 410-412.

29. Isāmī, 367-68.

30. Prof. Muhammad Habib in *Comprehensive History*, V. 449.

31. Cf. Firishṭa, 128.

32. Prof. Muhammad Habib, *op. cit.*, 449.

bore the title he had taken on ascending the throne. Both were signs of 'royalty' and not insignia of faith. If Khusrū became Nāsiruddīn on his coins,—author of the victory of the faith—in later centuries Ajit Singh of Marwar issued coins as Ajit Singh Ghazi, killer of infidels, when he assumed the role of an independent ruler of India.<sup>33</sup> Such contemporary insignia had no religious implication for rulers.

Nāsiruddīn's reign did not last long. Like many other rulers of Delhi his right to rule was challenged by another servant of Mubārak Shāh, Ghiās-ud-Dīn. In the battle that followed both Ghiāsuddin and Nāsiruddīn were served by Hindu and Muslim commanders. After some initial success, Nāsiruddīn, was defeated, fled from the battlefield and was captured and executed. If his Hindu followers were punished, they suffered as the losers in the game, rather than as apostates.

8. Our next case illustrates the difficulties of those had to face who undertook to convert Muslims to Hinduism. When Firūz Shāh Tughlaq was reigning at Delhi, he received complaint, some time after 1375, against a Brahman at Delhi. He had set up, so it was reported, some idols of wood. These were publicly worshipped by Hindus and some Muslims who could have been admitted to Hindu worship only if they had been converted to Hinduism. All doubts on this point are removed by the further assertion that some of these Muslim worshippers, ladies mostly, had been converted to Hinduism.<sup>34</sup> Thus here is a record of a Brahman converting Muslims to Hinduism and admitting the converts to public worship in his temple. He was burnt to death.

9. Another case involving the reconversion of 2,000 Brahman men and women occurred in the south about the end of the fourteenth century. The Rajas of Vijayanagar were always at war with their Bahmani neighbours. In 1398-1399 (801 A.H.) Dev Rāi, son of Harihar II, of Vijayanagar, invaded the territory of his Muslim neighbour. He was defeated in the struggle that ensued and 2,000 Brahmans, youngmen and young girls, were made captives by the armies of Firuz Shah Bahmani. This compelled the Raja to sue for peace as his Brahman subjects demanded that they be ransomed from their Muslim captors and restored to them. They were willing to pay the ransom.<sup>35</sup> A treaty was at last signed; 1,00,000 Huns were paid by Dev Rai and the Brahmans were then

33. Todd, 918, Calcutta edition.

34. *Tārīkh-i-Feruz-Shāhī*, Afif, 388.

35. *Firishta*, II, 311. *Firishta* makes Dev Rai ruler of Vijayanagar.

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released.<sup>36</sup> Now it stands to reason that as soon as the Brahmans were made captives they must have been converted, however nominally, to Islam. That the Brahmans should not only readmit them to the Hindu fold but actually demand their restoration proves that the present ideas about the attitude of the Hindus towards readmission of converts is of recent origin.

10. The next case occurs in the fifteenth century and involves the reconversions of thousands of Hindu converts to Islam. Zain-ul-Ābadīn who ruled in Kashmir from 1424 to 1460 allowed the Brahmans to reconvert those Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islam during the reign of his predecessor or who were otherwise willing to be reconverted. As a result of the lifting of the ban, many Hindus were readmitted into the Hindu fold.<sup>37</sup> Thus the real reasons why such conversions were not more common was not the reluctance of the Hindus to readmit their co-religionists to their fold but the religious policy of the Muslim kings which made such reconversions a capital offence.<sup>38</sup> So shocked are the Muhammadan historian by the liberality of this king that a story had to be invented to explain it. We are told the Zain-ul-Ābadīn who allowed these reconversion was in reality a Hindu Yogi who had, at the death bed of the king, projected his own soul into the body of dying Zain-ul-Ābadīn ! If anything, this explanation strengthens the contention that there was no strong feeling among the Hindus against the reconversion of their brethren who may have previously given up this faith.

11. Another case of the conversion of Muslim women to Hinduism is reported in *Subah-i-Sādiq* of Muhammad Sādiq. Puran. Mal, ruler of the fort of Rai Sen, in Sher Shāh's reign is reported to have converted many Muslim women and this is held there as one of the causes that induced Sher Shah to attack him.<sup>39</sup>

This history was composed in the year 1048 A.H. (1638-39 A.D.) within a century of Sher Shah's death and there is no reason to believe that it would invent such a tale without there being any foundation for

36. Ibid., II, 311. It is interesting to note that Prof. Gunty Venkat Rao (*Comprehensive History of India*, V, 1047) basing himself on Briggs' translation omits to mention the Brahmans' offer to the king to pay a share of the ransom money. But even Briggs, II, 370-78 has the story.

37. *Bahārīstān-i-Shāhī*, 66, 91-93; *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Sujan Rai, 388, 389; Firishta, II, 343, 345. *Comprehensive History of India*, V, 754 N. seems to dismiss the admission of the Hindus as an act of state !

38. Firishta and Sujan Rai, as in note 37.

39. *Subah-i-Sādiq*, f. 1710.

the same. Firishta completing his history in 1607 says that Puran Mal had 2000 Muslim women in his *harem* and gives this as a reason for Sher Shah's attack on him.<sup>40</sup>

12. Nāsir Khān, a son of Abdul Qādir, ruler of Kalpi, adopted the style of Nāsir Shāh and gave up Islam. Sultan Mahmūd of Malwa invaded his territories in order to punish him for his apostacy. Nāsir Khān thereupon declared himself a Muslim. But as he had deluded his Muslim neighbours by such a move before and had again adopted Hinduism, Mahmud decided that Nāsir Shāh would get Kalpi back only if after four months his conversion to Islam proved serious.<sup>41</sup> Here is case of a Muslim ruler, son of a Muslim father, renouncing Islam and adopting Hinduism openly to the scandal of the neighbouring Muslim rulers. His conversion to Hinduism must have been accepted by Hindus before it could become a danger to the Muslim faith to the extent of compelling his Muslim neighbours to invade his territories.

13. But probably the greatest of Muslim converts to Hinduism is Kabir. Born of Muslim parents, or adopted by them, this Muslim weaver lived to found a Hindu sect. The faithful have tried to make him a miracle child born of a widow daughter of a Brahman of Banaras whom Swami Rāmānand blessed with a son not knowing that she was a widow. When her father remonstrated, we are told, Rāmānand refused to modify his blessing. In due course the miracle child was born. But the Brahman was not sure that he would be able to persuade the sceptics and the scoffers that the birth of a child to a widow was the result of a miracle rather than an offshoot of sin. He tried to drown the boy who was, however, discovered by a Muslim weaver and his wife who took him home and brought him up as a son of their own. The faithful and the less believing are all however agreed that Kabir was brought up as a Muslim. His Muslim contemporaries claimed him as one of themselves and were prepared to fight the Hindus on this issue. But he was accepted as his disciple by Rāmānand, the great Hindu saint of Banaras, whose

40. Firishta, I, 228.

41. Firishta, II, 248 accuses him of having strayed from the straight path of law and of having adopted the religion (*Mazhab*) of *Ilhad* and *Zindaqa*, *Dictionary of Islam* defines *zindaqa* as a hopeless state of infidelity. Nasir Shah is also accused by Firishta of having entrusted Muslim women to Hindus for instruction in dancing. Cf. *Subah-Sādiq*, 1711. It is strange that the *Comprehensive History*, V, 719, 720, while indicating in note 34 that it has used Firishta (II), 598 has omitted to notice Firishta's mention of Nāsir-ud-Din's fall from grace being one of the reasons for the clash that followed.



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greatest disciple he lived to be. It was however not Rāmānand alone who claimed him as a Hindu. The contemporary Hindus knew him as their leader and a member of their faith. The story of the quarrel between the Hindus and the Muslims for performing his death rites according to their religious faith as recorded by Abul Fazal in the *Āin-i-Akbarī* proves that Kabir was known to be a Hindu to his contemporaries.<sup>42</sup> Of course, one can understand the Muslims trying to bury one born into their faith, but the Hindus could not have claimed to cremate him had they not accepted his conversion to Hinduism. Tradition further records his persecution as a Hindu saint at the hands of Sikander Lodi,<sup>43</sup> king of Delhi. Further, a large number of his Hindu followers are found even today in different parts of India, particularly the Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. In the latter state the Kabir Panthis, as his followers are called, were counted by the Punjab Government as caste Hindus for some time before the partition.

Here then is an example of a Hindu leaving Islam and rising to the rank of a religious leader of the Hindus. He is reckoned among the great Hindu devotees by Nabhaji, the author of the famous *Bhakt Mal*, the *Book of Hindu Saints* written in the seventeenth century and commented upon by Priya Das soon after. No greater proof is needed of the catholicity of a religion wherein a Muslim convert to it could rise to such a high position.

14. Prof. Kalikarnjan Qānūngo<sup>44</sup> has asserted in his *Sher Shah and His times* that Sālbahan was made a prisoner in an engagement by Mahmud Khilji III of Malwa and converted to Islam. He now became Salāhuddīn. He fled from Malwa and sought shelter under Rānā Sāngā who had him reconverted to Hinduism. He continued to be known even after his reconversion as Salahadi—(a corrupted form of Salāhuddīn). He fought under Rānā Sāngā's banner at Khannava. Popular Rajput tradition has it that he deserted Sāngā while the battle was raging furiously and his desertion became the chief cause of Rānā Sāngā's defeat. Gauri Shankar Ojha however disbelieves the story.<sup>45</sup>

15. Jahāngīr in the *Tuzuk* mentions another interesting case in his account of the fifth year of his reign. Kaukab, son of Qumār Khān,

42. *Āin-i-Akbarī*, II, 129, 171.

43. *Dabistān*, 200.

44. Qanungo, *Sher Shah and His Times* (Hindi), 409, 410. Salhadi was converted to Islam after his surrender to Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 938 A. H. (1531-32) and was killed soon after in the skirmish he provoked by refusing to accept his transfer to Baroda.

45. *Tuzuk-i-Bāburī*, 523, gives his Muslim name Salāh-ud-Din, Ojha.

went to a Yogi who began to teach him elements of Hindu religion and Yogic practices. This at last found a place in his heart and he accepted these un-Muslim instructions. He made two cousins of his partners in this 'error.' For some time the thing was kept a secret, but they were found out at last and the case was reported to the emperor. Kaukab and one of the cousins were imprisoned, another youngman was whipped in Jahāngīr's presence. Their punishment was rendered necessary, according to Jahāngīr, because it was feared that their example might prove catching and the contagion might spread. Obviously the danger apprehended was the conversion to Hinduism which Jahāngīr thus tried to prevent.<sup>46</sup>

16. In his fifteenth year while Jahāngīr was returning from Kashmir, he discovered that Muslims of Rajauri gave their Muslim daughters in marriage to Hindus. When they died they were burnt just as other Hindus were. Jahāngīr's account is clear, the Hindus married Muslim girls. This could have only happened if they were converted, admitted into the Hindu fold and accepted as Hindu by the contemporary Hindu society.<sup>47</sup>

17. The author of the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* writing in the reign of Shāh Jahān mentions several interesting instances of the conversion of the Muslims to Hinduism and their acceptance in their new faith. He was known to the Sikh Guru Hargobind and was on terms of intimacy with several Hindu saints. The cases that he records seem to be based either on his own information or on reliable authorities. The cases he records occurred in the reigns of Akbar, Jahāngīr or Shāh Jahān.

Gosāin Chaturpāth, who was a Nāgar Brahman from Gujarat and died in 1637 A.D., taught the author of the *Dabistān* the Hymn of the Surr and asked one of his disciples, Ganesh, to teach him the elements of Hindu religion.<sup>48</sup> The author of the *Dabistān* was not a born Hindu. This Gosāin seems to have been one of the foremost Hindu saints of his times. Jahāngīr and Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan were among those who respected him.

18. The author of the *Dabistān* met another Hindu saint, Kalyān Bhārtī in 1643 at the town of Kiratpur in the present district of Ropar in the Punjab. He was a Sanyasi, yet he had travelled in far-off Persia, lived among Muslims, returned to India and was still respected as a

46. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, 65, Cf. *Ma'āsir Jahāngīrī*, ff. 444 b, 445a, which supplements Jahangir's account.

47. *Tuzuk*, 322.

48. *Dabistān*, 184 to 186.

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great saint. There is reason to believe that when he lived in Persia he had become a Muslim. It was only the licentious life of Shāh Abbās Safawī, the Great (1583 to 1628 A.D.), that made him give up the religion which permitted such misdeeds.<sup>49</sup> His return and consequent acceptance among the Hindus is, therefore, significant.

19. The *Dabistān's* list, however, does not end here. We are told that a large number of Muslims were converted to Hinduism and admitted as Vairāgīs. The author speaks as if he had known of these cases himself. Among them we find two Muslim nobles who were admitted as Vairāgīs—Mirzā Haidar Sālīh and Mirzā Haidar.<sup>50</sup>

20. Another case that the smells of the conversion of a non-Hindu to Hinduism is that of Karan who became a Vairāgī.<sup>51</sup>

21. The enslavement and conversion of large number of Madārīs and Jalālīs is mentioned by the *Dabistān*, this time through the efforts of the Sanyasis. Jalālīs were the disciples of Sayyid Jalāl, a Muslim saint buried at Uch in Sind. They were Shi'as. The Madārīs were Sunnis. Once it so happened that the Muslims tried to sacrifice a cow at a place of Hindu pilgrimage where Sanyasis were assembled in large numbers. The Sanyasis rescued two cows by paying exorbitant ransom for this but the Muslims brought a third and sacrificed it. A battle followed. The Sanyasis killed seven hundred of these Muslims and defeated them. Their children were enslaved and brought up in the Hindu faith.<sup>52</sup>

22. The Sanyasis were not the only Hindu sectarians who admitted the Muslims into the Hindu faith. The Vaishnavas also admitted Muslims into the Hindu fold and converted some of them.<sup>53</sup>

23. When Guru Har Gobind came to Kiratpur he succeeded in converting a large number of Muslims in the neighbourhood of his place of residence so that not a Muslim was left between the hills near Kiratpur and the frontiers of Tibet and Bhutan.<sup>54</sup> This happened before the conquest of Kiratpur by the Mughals in 1645.

24. Shāh Jahān's reign contributes several interesting examples of the conversion of the Muslims to the Hindu faith. As we have seen above,

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49. *Dabistān*, 186-187.

50. *Ibid.*, 203.

51. *Ibid.*, 203.

52. *Ibid.*, 217. Sujan Rai, 425, places such a fight between the Sanyasis and the Muslims in the reign of Akbar who is said to have sent an army to help the Vairagis near Batala.

53. *Ibid.*, 218.

54. *Ibid.*, 235.

Jahāngīr was content with 'rescuing' in Rajauri Muslim girls from their husbands. When Shāh Jahān learnt of this custom, he imposed a fine if such Hindus as had married Muslim wives did not abjure their faith and accept Islam. This source of admitting a non-Hindu element into the Hindu population had been responsible for the conversion of a large number of Muslim women, when Shāh Jahān next ordered that the Hindus could keep their wives only if they accepted Islam. 5,000 conversions to Islam took place in Bhadnor alone.<sup>55</sup>

25. But this custom was not confined to Kashmir. Down in Gujrat in the Punjab, Shāh Jahān again faced the same situation. Here the disease was not so widespread, for only 70 women were found living in the houses of Hindus, having been admitted to the Hindu fold.<sup>56</sup>

26. But other places in the Punjab were also found where this custom of marrying Muslim girls was prevalent among the Hindus. From the rest of the Punjab 400 such cases were reported on investigation.<sup>57</sup>

27. In the tenth year he discovered Dalpat Rāi, a Hindu of Sirhind, still indulging in this forbidden practice. He had admitted one man and six women—his son, his wife and his daughters probably—to Hinduism and given them Hindu names.<sup>58</sup>

28. Hindu readiness to take converts was not curbed even under Aurangzeb. He received complaints on April 9, 1669, that in the provinces of Thatta and Multan, but particularly at Banaras, Hindus were using their temples as schools for Hindus and Muslims alike; they taught even Muslims Hindu religious books and thus presumably taking them away from their own faith.<sup>59</sup> But this statement deserves double notice. Muslims were accepted as their pupils by Hindu teachers who so gladly taught them Hindu religious books that the matter became a scandal for a king of Aurangzeb's puritanical temper. The Hindu teachers, presumably Brahmans, did not teach their Muslim students in their own houses but along with their Hindu students in the temples which were normally used as schools as well. Admission of non-Hindus to the Hindu temples was not permissible. It is possible that the portion used as schools had been set apart and was not a part of the shrine proper. But the whole building was still a temple. The admission of non-Hindus stood denied to the whole building. Such Muslims as were admitted to these buildings

55. Qazvīnī, *Bādshāhnāma*, ff. 444 b. 445 a.

56. Ibid., f. 445 b.

57. Ibid., f. 582 a and b.

58. Ibid., f. 562.

59. *Mā'āstr-i-Ālamgīrī*, p. 81.

must have been tested for their readiness to enter the Hindu fold, if not actually admitted thereto.

29. We have another case from Aurangzeb's reign. A Hindu of Hoshiarpur in the Punjab was converted to Islam and lived as a Muslim for a long time at Jullundur. He was subsequently reconverted to Hinduism. This was reported whereupon he was imprisoned. The Hindus of Hoshiarpur observed *hartal* thereon.<sup>60</sup> Hindus thus not only tolerated the conversion to Hinduism of converts to Islam but sympathised with those who suffered on account of their reconversion to Hinduism.

30. Bājājī Nāik Nimbalkar was the Chief of Phaltan under 'Adil Shāhīs. Capture of Phaltan by Shivaji in 1665 was probably interpreted by Muhammad Adil Shāh as due to his complicity and he was arrested, imprisoned and later on converted to Islam. After Shivaji's coronation in 1675, he sought readmission into the Hindu fold. Shivaji favoured the idea and had his Pundits find out the necessary penances he should undergo. The *Deval Smṛiti*<sup>61</sup> probably came to their help and he was taken back into the Hindu fold to resume his customary position in the house of Phaltan.<sup>61a</sup> Shivaji married one of his daughters Sukhubai to his son, Mahadji Nāik Nimbalkar.<sup>62</sup> As the Bhonsle genealogies do not mention either this daughter or her marriages,<sup>63</sup> it is possible Shivaji married her to Mahadji after Bājājī Nimbalkar's reconversion, putting thus the final seal of royal approval of Nimbalkar's readmission into the Hindu fold. The conservative Bhonsle genealogists ignored both the marriage as well as the bride.

31. Netājī Pālkar, Commander-in-Chief of Shivaji, was arrested during Shivaji's absence in Agra in 1666. He was taken to Agra and converted to Islam on pain of death. Strangely, whereas he had been a commander of 5000 before his arrest, now he became a commander of 3000. He was posted against the Afghans. Delair Khān had him recalled to the Daccan to supply local knowledge in his campaign against Shivaji. One evening he slunk away from the Mughal camp and joined Shivaji. At his request he was reconverted to Hinduism.<sup>64</sup>

32. Chaitanya admitted into Hinduism the Chief Minister and

60. *Inshā-i-Hamīd-ud-din*, p. 91.

61. *Deval Smṛiti* in collection of minor *Smṛitis*, the entire work is concerned with such conversions.

61-a. *Patar Sar Sangrah*, 161.

62. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, 97, 268.

63. Bhim Sain, *Nuskha-i-Dilkushā* (Marathi), 71.

64. *Jodhe Shākhāvalī* (ed., Apte and Divekar), 28; Sardesai, 268.

the Mīr Munshī of Husain Shāh of Bengal and converted to Hinduism Bijlī Khan and Harī Dās.<sup>65</sup>

33. Kanwar Kishan while in Kabul reconverted some women and eunuchs and kept them in his own house.<sup>66</sup>

34. Gangādhar Rangnāth, a Kulkarni, had joined Mughal service. There his misdeeds brought the displeasure of his superior on his head. He was arrested and offered release if he became Muslim. On his conversion he flourished exceedingly and soon amassed a fortune.

When he grew old, the pull of the old faith proved too strong for him. He renounced Mughal protection and patronage and with it the property he had amassed. He reached Raigarh and got Sambhāji interested in his case. Netāji Pālkar's case must have been unearthed as a precedent. Sambhāji got the Pundits to prescribe whatever penances they desired him to undergo in order to enable him to return to his old faith. They did so and with a stout heart Gangādhar did his utmost to do all they deemed necessary to cleanse him of his 'sin.' Thereupon Sambhāji had him admitted back into the Hindu fold as a Brahman.<sup>67</sup>

35. Describing the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, Justice Ranade in his *Rise of Maratha Power* speaks of many Muslim converts to Hinduism. Bashīram Bhat after having been a Muslim for some time reverted to his faith.<sup>68</sup> Shaikh Mahmud was converted to Hinduism and he converted many Muslims to his new faith.<sup>69</sup>

35 (a) During the Peshwaship of Mādhav Rāo (1761-1772), Narharī Narlekar who had embraced Islam was readmitted into the Hindu fold by the Brahmans of Paithana.<sup>69a</sup>

36. *The Census Report for the Punjab* for 1881 declares that Bajju Rajputs of Sialkot district (now in Pakistan) till quite recently converted a Muslim girl into the Hindu fold for purposes of marrying her by burying her in an underground chamber and ploughing the earth over her head. She was presumably held to be dead as a Muslim and on being taken out of the chamber, she arose as a Hindu and was acceptable

65. D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, 509; *Chaitanya and His Age*, D. C. Sen, 25, 219; *Chaitanya's Life and Teachings*, Jadunath Sarkar, (3rd edition), 233, 234, 327; *Chaitanya Movement*, Kennedy, 213, 214.

66. *Akhabārāt of May 9*, 1703.

67. *Itihāsa che Sadhan*, V, cited in Kincaid and Parasnis, 150.

68. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, 83.

69. Ranade, 89.

69-a. K. I. Sangrah, 26, cited by Ranade, 142.

among the Rajputs as a bride.<sup>70</sup>

37. In the concluding verses of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, we are told of Raja Ganga Singh. The first three verses make him the tenth sovereign after Bhoja and place his accession 500 years after Bhoja's death. We are then told that he was a contemporary of Raja Jai Chand of Kannauj and Anang Pāl of Delhi. Under him Malechhas began to perform all the duties of the Aryas, so much so that Kalī was at last frightened and went to Krishna to remonstrate with him for this sorry state of things, the prevalence of so much religion in an age which he had been assured would be particularly dominated by its absence. Again in his lament we come across a very significant phrase. His sons, the Malechhas, he laments, have adopted the Aryan religion.

A little later on we find the *Bhaviṣya* recording the reconversions of Hindu converts to Islam enmass in different cities of India. Many converts to Islam had been made. This, we are told, evoked a reaction. The Aryas felt depressed. But they soon found out a remedy. The disciples of Krishna Chaitanya took upon their shoulders the hazardous task of reconverting their lost brethren. Then follows a string of names of the preachers with the locality of their ministry. Disciples of Rāmānand went to Ayodhya and converted the Malechhas there to Hinduism. They came to be known as Śanyogīs. Nimbāditya with his disciples went to Kanchipur. Viṣṇu Swāmī went to Hardwar. To Mathura proceeded Mādhvāchārya. Ordered by Rāmānand, Śankrachārya of Śaiva persuasion went to Banaras. Rāmānand himself went to Kannauj. Dhanvantri chose Allahabad as his centre of activities. Bhattoji, Jai Dev, Kabīr, and Sadhana, helped in this good work. The efforts of the Muslims were thus undone. A large number of adherents were secured by Vaiṣanavas, Śaivites and Śāktikas.

A very interesting part of this description in the *Bhaviṣya* is the different types of *Mantras* these teachers gave their followers, the varying shape of the mark on the forehead (*Tilaka*) that they employed, the necklace that they asked their disciples to wear. All the outward emblems of Hinduism have been exhausted in order to prove that the Malechha converts to Islam (?)—were thus regularly and formally admitted into the Hindu fold.<sup>71</sup>

Unlike the first extract cited, the author here does not look upon the admission of the Muslims into the Hindu fold as something strange

70. *Punjab Castes*, 115.

71. Vol. II, book 3, part 4, Chapter 4, verses 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 61, 67.

and lamentable. This is important when we remember the fact that the age of this part of the *Bhavisya* is uncertain. It may indeed be very modern. But all this does not destroy the fact that the writer knew of an earlier tradition of conversions and was content to record it with obvious relish.

The truth of these facts recorded by the writer of this part of the *Bhavisya* may be easily questioned. We would at once concede that all the facts mentioned here need not be true. We admit that the preachers lumped together here were not all contemporaries. We further recognize that several of them were not disciples of Chaitanya. But when all allowance has been made, we are left to face the fact that the writer of the *Bhavisya* knew of an old tradition when several Hindu preachers in different localities counteracted the growing power of Islam by reconverting Hindu converts to Islam back to the Hindu fold, as also by admitting the Muslims to the Hindu fold. He may have confused the tradition, played havoc with chronology and transplanted preachers and places. What is still more important, this time his sympathies are with reformers.

38. Mula Jats living in Jind, Rohtak and Hissar before the partition were Muslims who trace their conversion to an ancestor who was taken as a hostage to Delhi and there forcibly converted. Some of his companions, however, were kept as captives in Delhi. When released from captivity, they returned to their home districts and were accepted as Hindus after undergoing necessary penances.<sup>72</sup>

Thus from Sind to Madurai, from Gujrat to Kashmir, from Banaras to Thatta every where an almost continuous stream, however small, of conversions and reconversions seems to have been running all through the ten centuries of the Muslims rule in India. Hindus not only welcomed, though occasionally only, their brethern back to their fold from Islam but were prepared to admit Muslims into their faith and did admit them as a matter of fact. Thus another element was added to the make-up of the present Hindu population.

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72. *Punjab Castes*, 126.



## The Kamins of the Punjab (1849-1901)

HIMADRI BANERJEE\*

The impact of British rule on the different aspects of the agrarian society of the Punjab has received serious attention from scholars in India and abroad. Recent researches have thrown some valuable lights about changes on the position and status of the *zamindars*. But the role of the *kamins*, numerically a significant group in the rural society, has not adequately been studied by them. This paper is an attempt to assess the role of three important groups of *kamins*, namely *kumhars*, *tarkhans* and *chamars*, during the second half of the 19th century.

### 1. The role of Kamins in the agrarian economy of the province :

*Kamins* are those village servants, the blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, etc., with whom there is a sort of prescriptive contract to do the work of their respective trades for each agriculturist, who pays them a certain fixed portion of the produce of his field.<sup>1</sup> *Kamins* were usually divided into two distinct groups, according to the nature of the functions rendered by them : (1) those whose labour was 'intimately connected with agriculture,'<sup>2</sup> such as *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *chamars*, etc., and (2) those who rendered service less regularly, such as *kumhars*, *chuhars* and *nais*, whom the *zamindars* called house menials or *khangi kamins*. Their wages were determined by the utility of their services.

*Kamins* were commonly paid in kind at harvest out of the common heap of produce or *tala*. They were usually first to be paid from the *tala* and the total deduction for their payments varied from one-sixth to one-eighth of the gross produce. In Hoshiarpur it was often as high as one-fourth of the gross produce and it indicated, as the District Officer observes, 'a fair index of the standard of comfort and general prosperity of the proprietors.'<sup>3</sup> But in most of the western districts, viz., Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan, they did not constitute as numerous a community. The poor economic condition of the peasant proprietors prevented any large scale appointment of menials and wages paid to them

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1. *Ferozepore Settlement Report* (Herein after S.R.) 1859, para 191, p. 63.

2. *Rohtak S.R.* 1880, para 84, p. 96.

3. *Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer* (Herein after D.G.) 1883-84, p. 71.

were not as high as in the central and submontane districts of the province. The following tables will illustrate the point.

**Table 1**

Proportion of three important *kamins* per 1000 of total population in three districts of the province

Name of the district	Proportion of menials per 1000 of total population		
	Tarkhans	Lohar	Chamar/Mochi
1	2	3	4
Amritsar (Central Punjab)	39	21	1+27
Sialkot (Submontane Punjab)	41	18	8+15
Bannu (Western Punjab)	17	14	...+12

Source : Ibbetson, Denzil. *Panjab Castes, Being a reprint on the chapter on 'the Races, Castes and Tribes of the People' in the Report on the Census of the Punjab*, published in 1883 by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson., K.C.S.I. (Patiala, 1970), Abstract Nos. 100 and 101.

**Table 2**

Total *kamiana* deductions in per cent. from the total gross produce in three districts of the province

Name of the district	Year	Total <i>kamiana</i> deduction from the gross produce in per cent.
1	2	3
Muktsar-Ferozepore (Central Punjab)	1878	Approximately 10 per cent.
Hoshiarpur (Submontane Punjab)	1879	Approximately 10 per cent.
Daman-Dera Ismail Khan (Western Punjab)	1879	Less than tenth of the gross produce (i.e., 93/1000 or approximately 9.3 per cent.).

Source : *Pargannah Muktsar and Ilaka Mamdot S. R. 1878*, p. 11; *Hoshiarpur S. R. 1915*, p. 11 and *Dera Ismail Khan S. R. 1879*, p. 371.

It is clear from Table I that the *kamins* had their greater concentration in the eastern submontane districts like Sialkot and Amritsar while in the extreme western parts of the province they were less numerous. Actually the more we move towards the west across the Ravi the more will be the scarcity of these artisan groups in the rural society of the province. In the western districts like Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan agricultural operations were characterised by a great insecurity; here the

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*zamindars* were not affluent enough to employ them regularly. On the other hand, in the eastern submontane and central districts *zamindars* were, however, comparatively better off and hence they could afford to employ them more frequently.

Another interesting aspect of this *kamiuna* payment was that this was determined generally by customary rules and under Sikh rule their relationship with *zamindars* was more or less marked by a spirit of mutual dependence and understanding. But during the period under review this relationship witnessed a gradual change.

### 2. *Kumhars* :

The *kumhars* usually supplied little jars attached to the rims of the Persian wheel and large dishes for sugar mills. In domestic ceremonies also they furnished earthen vessels of different sizes, commonly known as *lick*. For manufacturing all these wares, they procured clay for their ovens and fuel for baking pots, free of charge from village *zamindars*. They required open air and dry weather to harden their pots before they were put to oven. They were obviously out of employment during rainy season when they usually worked in the fields of others as agricultural labourers. Winter was their busy season because village wells were mostly then under effective operations and each required a full supply of water pots attached to the rims of the Persian wheels. They also kept donkeys of their own to carry grain from the threshing floor.

As village menials, the importance of *kumhars* varied from place to place. In most of the submontane and central districts like Sialkot, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Gujrat and Gujranwala, easy availability of water at the surface greatly increased the importance of well-irrigation as well as of *kumhars*. In the two adjoining Charkaree circles of Sialkot and Gujranwala they held a place of great importance because here cultivation almost solely depended on well-irrigation. On the other hand, in the extreme northwestern and western districts like Bannu, Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan the precarious nature of annual rainfall, coupled with low water level, made well-irrigation often a costly and difficult process, thus reducing their scope of employment. Consequently, in the districts of Kohat and Hazara, their names did not occur as village menials receiving customary dues out of the common heap of produce at harvest.<sup>4</sup> But in the districts like Jhang, Multan and Montgomery dry cultivation was almost an impossibility, wells together with inundation canals played a very vital role in agrarian operations. In Jhang, for example, it was estimated (1878)

4. Kohat S. R. 1884, para 339, p. 168; Hazara S. R. 1876, para 55, pp. 101-102.

that nearly 68.9 per cent. of the cultivated area was under well-irrigation. In this district kumhars were regarded as one of the three *vadde kamins* or *kamin* proper<sup>5</sup> receiving same rates of wages with tarkhans and nais. In Montgomery the greater part of the cultivated area was protected by wells and kumhars along with tarkhans were known as the only two superior *kamins* of this district and they were generally paid out of the *tala* at the harvest.<sup>6</sup>

It is, therefore, evident that the importance of kumhars varied greatly from region to region. A similar type of variation, often at a district level, could be seen during the period under review. In this connection, the, *mauza* Choti of Dera Ghazi Khan district deserves our special mention. The Settlement Officer pointed out the existence of two different tracts: one irrigated from wells with kumhars as essential menials, and the second irrigated by hill streams without any significant assistance from kumhars. In the first tract kumhars got 15 *topas* or nearly 60 seers of wheat from the *tala* while in the second no grain share was kept reserved for them. In Jullundur also kumhars were of importance only in villages irrigated by wells,<sup>7</sup> while in Ferozepore the Settlement Officer found that in 'the well-irrigated villages of Guru Har Sahai, the *kamins* are the tarkhan (carpenter), kumhar (potter), lohar (blacksmith) and chuhra (sweeper). Elsewhere the potter is not considered a *kamin*.'<sup>8</sup>

While such diversity characterised the role of kumhars, their rates of wages also varied from place to place. Their wages were comparatively higher in the well-irrigated tracts where their services were regularly called for, while in the *sailab* or *barani* regions, their wages were somewhat less. Actually in the well-irrigated areas, they had to remain in constant touch with *zamindars* for a regular supply of the water pots for the Persian wheel; but in the *sailab*, their services, though required, were not on the same scale; consequently, their wage rates were slightly higher in the former tract. The problem could be studied with reference to two widely separated districts.

It is thus clear that wages paid to kumhars were slightly higher in the well irrigated area than in the *sailab* tract. During the period under review a few significant changes took place in the forms of their payment. Prior to this period they were commonly paid like other *kamins*, out

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5. Jhang S. R. 1882, para 127, p. 99.

6. Montgomery S. R. 1899, para 39, pp. 29-30.

7. Jullundur S. R. 1892, para 54, p. 87.

8. Pargannah Muktsar and Ilaka Mamdot S.R. 1878, para 30, p. 11.

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of the common heap at the harvest. That rate, no doubt, varied and *zamindars* did not generally deprive them of their dues. But towards the close of the century in some parts of the province they almost ceased to be recognised as *kamins*; on many occasions they were paid in cash for their services. This process of change was generally of a very slow nature and in the 1860s the Settlement Officer of Rawalpindi noted it.<sup>9</sup> In Gurgaon also a similar development took place. Here in the *tahsils* like Rewari and Gurgaon, a kumhar was not included in the list of village menials receiving dues out of the common heap at the harvest, while in the three other *tahsils* (Ferozepore, Nuh and Palwal) he was mostly remunerated alone by tenants.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 3**

Different rates of wages paid to kumhars in two widely separated districts of the province

Year	District	Wages paid to kumhars
1	2	3
1883	Karnal	The kumhar gets the same as the tarkhan. When he provides earthen vessels for the Persian wheels he generally receives 40 to 50 seers per Persian wheel and a small bundle ( <i>gaira</i> ) of corn (the <i>gaira</i> ) amounts to 5 seers); otherwise he gets 12 to 20 seers per plough.
1878	Montgomery : villages on the Ravi	During the spring harvest kumhars receive the same as tarkhans (per well 12 <i>pais</i> and 3 bundles of grain). During the autumn harvest, they receive a lower rate of wages in the <i>sailab</i> lands (per plough $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>pai</i> and 1 bundle of grain).

Source : *Panipat Tahsil and Pargannah Karnal S.R. 1883*, paras 286-287, p. 117; *Montgomery S.R. 1878*, para 58, p. 134.

This general change in the form of the payment of wages to kumhars was no doubt due to various factors two of which merit special attention.

9. Settlement Officer, Rawalpindi's remarks quoted in *Rawalpindi D.G. 1883-84*, p. 75.

10. *Gurgaon S.R. 1909*, para 27, p. 21.

In the first place; with the increasing popularity of canal irrigation, well-irrigation often came to be regarded a laborious and costly form of cultivation. Naturally, *zamindars* found it convenient to change over to canal irrigation; this must have restricted the scope of employment of kumhars as regular village *kamins*. Secondly, in some of the central and eastern districts, the greater use of metal utensils, replacing earthen wares, produced locally by kumhars, also greatly reduced their importance. Consequently, many *zamindars* found little justification in appointing kumhars as regular *kamins* or in paying them out of the common heap at harvest.<sup>11</sup>

This increasing prevalence of the cash wage rate must have greatly affected the economic condition of the kumhars. In many cases it encouraged *zamindars* to cut down their wages, thus making ancestral caste calling an unremunerative one. It was also destined to produce a number of changes in their existing occupational pattern. To supplement their meagre income many of them started selling their earthen vessels not only to one particular village but to nearby villages. In Muzaffargarh this attempt of extending their area of trade transactions had been clearly established by the Bhambu Sandila village enquiry of the 1930s.<sup>12</sup> In Bhadas (Gurgaon) also the same process had been going on over the years.

While a number of kumhars were trying to extend the scope of their marketing operations in the adjoining villages, many of them almost simultaneously thought of giving up their traditional caste callings and of deserting their ancestral villages. Of the different village enquiries of this century, at least four of them clearly indicated that many of the villages which had previously their own potters, now ceased to have any of them. In this connection villages like Gajju Chak in Gujranwala, Kutubpur in Hoshiarpur, Gaggar Bhana in Amritsar, Mahmadvpur in Hissar could be mentioned. In Mahmadvpur, for example, their customary wages were fast declining and their relations with employers were equally hostile and strained.<sup>13</sup> In Kutubpur also they were increasingly paid in cash for each pot supplied to *zamindars*,<sup>14</sup> while in Gaggar Bhana there was practically

11. Singh, S. Gian, *An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana—a village in Amritsar District* (The Board of Economic Inquiry Punjab village Survey No. 1, Lahore, 1928), pp. 23 and 149.

12. Khan, Abdur Rahim, *An Economic Survey of Bhambu Sandila—a village in Muzaffargarh District* (The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Villages Survey No. 8, Lahore, 1935), p. 15.

13. *Rohitak D.G. 1910*, vol.—IIIA, p. 15.

14. Lucas, E. D. (*The Economic Life of a Punjab Village* (Lahore, no date), p. 73.

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little for the the kumhars to do with the introduction of iron buckets for the Persian wheel.<sup>15</sup>

Under these circumstances many of them found it convenient to take up the profession of general carriers of different agricultural produces with which they were long associated in the rural society. Now the trade in agricultural produces was also fast increasing in volume and kumhars had their own donkeys to carry food grains from the threshing floor to the nearer market centres.<sup>16</sup> Similarly in Gaggar Bhanna kumhars from other villages were found frequently coming to that village to by sugar (*gur*) and to take it away to other parts of the province.<sup>17</sup> In Gajju Chak (Gujranwala district) their role in marketing agricultural produces merit special mention :

What instructions the cultivator may give to these *ghumars*, they usually finish by taking the produce to their own brokers who feed them free on such visits and small sums of Rs. 20/- to Rs. 40/- without interest for short periods such as a month or so; in this way the ignorant producer suffers loss and is misled. He does not generally find it convenient to accompany the *ghumars* to market and confines himself to giving oral instructions as to how the produce is to be sold, and these instructions are ignored on the pretence of forgetfulness. Even worse, when the cultivator does not accompany them, they are not above stealing some of the produce on the way to the market. The trader who purchases in the village and employs *ghumars* is more familiar with their tricks and takes precautions to see that they do not act against his orders.<sup>18</sup>

This period also witnessed the acquisition of lands by the kumhars in different districts of the province which provided an opportunity for them to elevate their social status in the rural society. This slow shift over to agriculture was clearly noted even in the 1870s by the Settlement Officer of the Sirsa district. Here many of them were wholly engaged in agricultural labour rather than in potter's work. 'They are excellent and thrifty cultivators, not inferior to the Bagri Jats from whom they are hardly distinguishable in the physique, dress, habits and language.'<sup>19</sup> In

15. Singh, S. Gian, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

16. Dass, Anchal, *An Economic Survey of Gajju Chak—a village in the Gujranwala District* (The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Village Survey No. 6, Lahore, 1934), p. 143.

17. Singh, S. Gian, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

18. Dass, Anchal, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

19. *Sirsa S.R. 1884*, para 90, pp. 102-103.

some parts of the Ferozepore district, a few villages were also owned by kumhars who usually surrounded themselves with tenants of their own tribe.<sup>20</sup> This process of acquisition of land resulted in the development of the stronger and healthier unit of cultivation. From the stand point of utilisation of land they were undoubtedly pre-eminently suitable because they were as much devoted to agriculture as were the Jats of the same tract. Besides it also generated a new sense of status consciousness among the kumhars; they did not hesitate to claim a higher status from the Jodhpuri kumhars who were still busy in their traditional caste calling.

But the Punjab Alienation of Land Act did not recognise them as agricultural tribe, legally entitled to purchase or acquire the lands of others in the rural society. Consequently, they had little access to the brisk land market of the present century. Subsequently, the Bagri kumhars (a sub caste of the kumhars) alone were allowed to enjoy the status of purely agricultural tribe,<sup>21</sup> while the claims of others to enjoy this respectable status were rejected by the government.

### 3. Tarkhans and Lohars :

They were two important groups of *kamins*. *Zamindars* provided wood out of which tarkhans had to make and keep in working order all the wooden agricultural implements. They had also to make and mend articles like household furniture and the sugarcane press. Occasionally, they were asked to dig graves at the funerals.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the lohars were expected to perform certain customary duties, such as repairing all agricultural implements, like *datri*, *khurpa* and *hal* with his own iron and constructing new ones, the *zamindars* often providing iron. They were commonly paid in kind at harvest out of the common heap of produce.

These two important groups were generally uniformly paid in different parts of the province. In Karnal, the Settlement Officer found that the lohar 'receives the same' as the tarkhan.<sup>23</sup> In Lyallpur also a village survey conducted in the early 1930s equally confirmed this fact.<sup>24</sup> This uniform rate of wages paid to these *kamins* was perhaps largely due to the fact that they performed almost similar functions in the rural economy.

This uniform rate of wages not, however, applicable to all the districts of the province. In Montgomery, the Settlement Officer noted that

20. *Ferozepore D.G. 1915, XXXA*, p. 101.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Khan, Abur Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

23. *Panipat Tahsil and Pargannah Karnal S.R. 1883*, paras 286-287, p. 117.

24. Singh, Randhir, *An Economic Survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman (Chak 73, G.B.)—village in the Lyallpur District (Lahore, 1932)*, p. 17.



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the tarkhans enjoying a higher rate of wages than the lohars on land attached to the wells.<sup>25</sup> They were also entitled to the first plucking of one day's cotton from the fields at harvest, a privilege usually given to lohars only when the former had completed it. The following table aptly summed up the different wage rates prevailing in this district.

**Table 4-**

Wages paid to tarkhans and lohars in the Sutlej villages

Tarkhans	Lohars
1	2
Grain : 4 <i>mans</i> per well per annum;	Grain : 2 <i>mans</i> per well per annum;
Grain : 1 <i>topa</i> per heap each harvest;	Grain : 1 <i>topa</i> per heap each harvest;
Grain : 1 bundle per share each harvest;	Grain : 1 bundle per share each harvest;
Zabti : 20 <i>subbs</i> of tobacco per well;	Zabti : 10 <i>subbs</i> of tobacco per well;
Zabti : One day's cotton-picking.	Zabti : One day's cotton-picking.

Source : *Montgomery S.R. 1878*, para 57, p. 131.

It is clear from the above that tarkhans were getting somewhat a higher rate of wage than lohars. In many cases there was even a qualitative difference in the crops paid to these *kamins* as wages at harvest. Wace, Settlement Officer of Hazara, recorded many such cases prevailing in the Khari, Gandgar, Srikot and Swathi tracts of this district. He found that carpenters were almost universally paid in wheat while blacksmiths received their dues often in barley<sup>26</sup> at the *rabi* harvest.

This higher rate of wages paid to tarkhans indicated their greater importance as *kamins* in that particular tract. This was no doubt due to the fact that in this region, tarkhans performed many of the functions elsewhere kept reserved for lohars. Under these circumstances, tarkhans were held in greater importance by *zamindars* and their wages also increased at the time of the harvest. Actually in the irrigated tracts of Lahore, the Settlement Officer found that lohars received lower rates of wages than the tarkhans because their duties were considered 'much lighter.' Elsewhere in the unirrigated tracts of this district, these two *kamins* were paid more or less uniformly.

25. *Montgomery S.R. 1899*, para 39, p. 30.

26. *Hazara S.R. 1876*, para 55, p. 101.

Another significant aspect of their wage payment was the fact that they were not invariably paid in kind out of the common heap of produce at the harvest. As early as 1878 it was pointed out that in Muktsar (Ferozepore), blacksmiths were paid by tenants<sup>27</sup> at a time when carpenters were still receiving their dues out of the *tala* and their burdens were shared by *zamindars* and 'tenants' alike. In Rawalpindi, perhaps the decline in their customary rates of wages made these two groups of *kamins* often quite independent of the control of *lambardars*, while in Rohtak this frequently led to bitter wrangles and feuds at the time of harvest.<sup>28</sup> In Multan blacksmiths were paid per job<sup>29</sup> performed by them, though in Gujranwala both of them continued to be paid out of the *tala* even at the beginning of the present century.<sup>30</sup>

This changing form of wage payment had deep impact on the economic condition of these *kamins* in the last quarter of the 19th century. In view of the differences in the rates of wages received by them, a few regional studies would greatly help us to have a better understanding of this problem. Two rural wage surveys (1909 and 1912) throw light on the movement of general wages rates between 1889 and 1912. They did not furnish required information on the annual fluctuations in wage rates from 1889 to 1909 and 1909 to 1912. On the other hand the *Prices and Wages in India*, published annually since 1873, greatly help us in filling up this particular gap. These data had one great limitation, viz., wage rates supplied by them chiefly related to carpenters and blacksmiths of towns and their wage rates were slightly higher than the rural rates.<sup>31</sup> Under these circumstances, in analysing the wage rates of these years, it would be convenient to take up both those two rates serially, one for indicating the actual rural wage rates (as furnished by the two rural wage surveys of 1909 and 1912) and the other for explaining the extent of annual fluctuations of wage rates of this period (as furnished by the *Prices and Wages in India*).

It is evident from tables (Nos. 5 to 7) that wages of carpenters and blacksmiths appreciably rose in all four districts between 1889 and 1912. While explaining the causes of this spectacular rise in wages,

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27. *Rawalpindi S.R. 1893*, para 146, p. 36.

28. *Rohtak D.G. 1910*, vol.-IIIA, pp. 143-144.

29. *Multan D.G. 1901-02*, p. 187.

30. *Wazirabad, Gujranwala and Sharqpur Tahsils S.R. 1914*, para 59, p. 24.

31. Memorandum by W. C. Renouf, Director of Agriculture, on the Wages Survey of the Punjab taken in December 1909 *Selections from the Records of the Financial Commissioner, Punjab* (Lahore, 1910), No. 49, No. LXXVIII, para 11.

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**Table 5**

Average daily wages of carpenter and blacksmith  
in four districts in annas in 1889, 1909 and 1912.

District	Average daily wages in annas					
	1889		1909		1912	
	Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ludhiana	4	4	12	12	12 to 16	14 to 16
Amritsar	6	6	10 to 12	...	12 to 16	...
Sialkot	4 to 6	4 to 5	8 to 12	...	11 to 15	12
Jhang	6 to 8	6 to 8	16	...	12 to 20	10 to 16

Source : *F. C. Selections*, New Series, No. 24, No. LXXVIII, para 10;  
*Report on the First Regular Wages Survey of the Punjab taken in December 1912* (Lahore, 1913), Table B.

**Table 6**

Average price of wheat (40 seers) in rupees and average daily wages of  
carpenter and blacksmith in seers of wheat in 1889, 1909 and 1912.

District	Average price of wheat			Average daily wages in seers of wheat					
	per maund (40 seers)			1889		1909		1912	
	in Rs.			Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ludhiana	2.377	4.077	3.21	4.02	4.2	7.3	7.3	9.3 to 12.4	10.8 to 12.4
Amritsar	2.455	3.88	3.037	6.02	6.2	6.3 to 7.7	...	9.8 to 13.1	...
Sialkot	2.577	3.883	3.103	4.3+	4.3+	5.1 to 7.7	...	8.7 to 11.9	9.6
Jhang	2.367	43.234		7.2+	7.2+	10	...	9.2 to 15.4	7.7 to 12.3

Source : *Price and Wages of India*, 1902, 19th Issue, Table 2; *Ibid.*, 1913, 30th Issue, Table 2.

+ In calculating the average daily wages in seers of wheat in 1889 in Sialkot and Jhang, for convenience, their average daily wages in annas have been fixed on 4.5 and 7 annas (instead of 4 to 5 annas and 6 to 8 annas as shown in Table 5) for Sialkot and Jhang respectively.

**Table 7**

Index number of daily wages of carpenter and blacksmith  
in 1889, 1909 and 1912 in four districts of the province (1889=100).

District	1889		1909		1912	
	Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith	Carp- enter	Black- smith
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ludhiana	100	100	173.8	173.8	221.4 to 295.2	251.1 to 295.2
Amritsar	100	100	104.6 to 127.9	...	162.7 to 217.6	...
Sialkot	100	100	118.9 to 179.06	...	202.3 to 276.7	223.2
Jhang	100	100	138.8	...	127.7 to 213.8	105.5 to 254.2

Source : Same as Tables 5 and 6.

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the Settlement Officer of the Gurdaspur district pointed out as many as four major reasons : rise in the prices of food grains, scarcity of labour, independence of the labouring class and, finally, a general rise in the standard of comfort.<sup>32</sup>

These causes explain the general rise in wages after 1900-01 in the Punjab. Prior to this period, at least in some districts of the province, the rise in their wages was not of a general nature. In some cases there was even a decline in the real wages of these *kamins* towards the close of the last century. Of the four districts mentioned earlier, at least two, namely Ludhiana and Amritsar, witnessed a sharp fall in wages in the 1890s. In these two districts their wages in the context of general price rise no doubt increased; but prices rose even at a faster rate. Further, the easy availability of labour at a cheaper rate (largely due to the steady growth of population in the 1880s and 1890s with little alternative scope of employment in public works within these districts) also largely prevented any general rise of their wages. The famines of the 1890s inevitably resulted in a reduction of their wage rates. Finally, the small

32. *Gurdaspur D. G.* 1914, vol.-XXXIA, p. 131.

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peasant proprietors in the background of a general price rise were also compelled to economise their cost of cultivation, often by cutting down the customary wages paid to these *kamins* at the harvest.

Under former rulers when the revenue was realised in kind a small portion of the whole produce was set apart for the *kamins* . . . With a cash demand this custom disappeared, and the *kamins* now receive their allowance from the cultivating proprietors in a lump at each harvest. There is none of elaborate division of the produce such as is customary . . . and, even a tenant pays his rent in kind, no deduction is made from the common heap; but each party gives his *kamins* from his own house a fixed amount of produce and not a share of the whole . . . There has been a tendency to break up the constitution of the village in regard to these menials, the action being mostly on the part of the proprietors, for the *kamins* are generally much too degraded to wish for any change, and are in the power of the proprietors completely, not having even the option of changing their abode when too hard pressed. The result has been that the proprietors' attempt<sup>33</sup> to cut down the allowances, and make new terms with the *kamins*.

This decline in their customary rates of wage in the background of a general price rise coupled with a persistent attempt on the part of *zamindars* to pay them increasingly in cash must have adversely affected their economic condition towards the close of the century. In many cases they often found it unremunerative to stick to purely *kamins'* service and consequently left their villages and migrated to canal colonies to earn a better livelihood there.

While such cases occurred in two important central districts, in Jhang there was a steady rise in their wages towards the close of the century. Steedman, Settlement Officer of Jhang, found that here these two groups of artisans were universally regarded as *vadde kamins* and did not receive any harsh treatment from the *zamindars*. They are a far too valuable element in the village community for the *lambardar* or proprietor to oppress them in any extraordinary manner. They also get in addition to grain fees, bundles of fodder from wells in season.' 'It is a mistake to suppose, as is often done, that they are a miserable, down-trodden poverty-stricken set of men.'<sup>34</sup>

This importance attached to them no doubt led to favourable rate

[See p. 301

33. *Ludhiana D. G.* 1888-89, pp. 99-101.

34. *Jhang S.R.* 1882, para 130, pp. 100-101.

**Table 8**  
Average monthly wages of carpenter and blacksmith in  
Ludhiana and Amritsar, 1873-1901.

Year	In rupees		In seers of wheat		Index number real wages (1873=100)	
	Ludhiana	Amritsar	Ludhiana	Amritsar	Ludhiana	Amritsar
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1873	11	12.67	276.7	306.99	100	100
1874	11	11.31	281.3	275.96	100.6	89.74
1875	10	13	262.7	324.09	94.95	105.5
1876	8	12.62	207.1	311.9	74.85	101.6
1877	10	14	251.9	350.84	91.03	114.3
1878	10	13	171.7	222.3	62.05	72.43
1879	10	13	153.2	182.78	55.38	59.55
1880	10	12.62	177.3	206.46	64.09	67.28
1881	10	12.69	198.8	258.11	71.85	84.09
1882	10	13	257.1	320.58	93.30	104.4
1883	10	12.62	241.3	301.36	87.20	98.24
1884	10	12.69	254.2	331.71	91.85	108
1885	10	12.69	278.7	333.11	100.7	108.5
1886	9	15	198	306.30	71.57	99.77
1887	12	13.5	199.44	215.46	72.06	70.20
1888	13.31	14.5	203.58	243.02	73.58	79.16
1889	13.12	14.5	286.9	299.71	103.7	97.63
1890	10.81	14.5	206.6	274.92	74.67	89.56
1891	12.5	14.5	195.3	209.67	70.57	68.31
1892	16	14.5	233.92	196.17	84.55	63.57
1893	11.37	14.5	203.75	237.36	73.62	77.32
1894	11.17	14.5	285.7	365.54	103.2	119.1
1895	12.5	14.5	252.1	273.03	91.11	88.94
1896	13.5	15	172	192	62.16	62.55
1897	12	15	132.48	154.65	47.86	50.4
1898	13.5	15	238.6	246.3	86.24	80.23
1899	15	15	252.45	244.35	91.22	79.62
1900	15	15	185.55	184.95	67.08	60.27
1901	16	15	237.90	237.45	85.98	77.36

Source : *Prices and Wages in India*, 19th Issue (Calcutta, 1902).

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*From p. 299]*

of wages paid to them at harvest. Further with the commencement of canal construction and canal irrigation in this part of the province their rates of wages further increased, since it created an extraordinary demand for labour for bringing newer lands under cultivation. In the adjoining districts like Multan the introduction of canal irrigation resulted in even a higher rate of wages.

This higher rate of wages paid to carpenters and blacksmiths in the canal irrigated tracts encouraged many of them residing in the densely populated central and submontane districts to migrate there. The peasant-colonists brought their own artisans from their own old villages because they found them 'more trustworthy.'<sup>35</sup> Besides the migration to canal colonies, many of them flocked to towns where they often worked as independent artisans. In this connection districts like Lahore, Sialkot, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana and Jullundur, with largescale building constructions and the manufacture of furniture, etc., afforded a large opening to carpenters.<sup>36</sup> Here they were frequently engaged in carpentry, brick-burning or other forms of day labour. They also made carts, all sort of furniture and boxes and amassed great wealth. Many of them were in service.<sup>37</sup> Like the carpenters, many blacksmiths moved to towns in search of higher wages and better job facilities during the closing years of the century. Dr Lucas in his Kutubpur (Hoshiarpur) village enquiry found that many village lohars had already emigrated to towns and larger cities for earning higher wages there.<sup>38</sup> This movement towards town offered them an opportunity to earn more, to amass wealth and to improve their economic condition.

The Tarkhans earn much money in the railway workshops and other places away from the village. Some of them.. leave the village for work elsewhere, often getting good pay and having an easier time than if they stayed at home. Some of the men are also employed by the Attock Oil Company at Rawalpindi. The average earnings of these persons, who have work out-side the village, is Rs. 60/- to Rs. 75/- per mensem.<sup>39</sup>

This period also witnessed a large scale acquisition of lands by these *kamins*. To many of them association with agriculture was the most

35. *Annual Report for the Chenab, Jhelum, Churian and Sohag Para Colonies, 1902-03* Chenab Colony, para 12, p.11.

36. *Census of India, 1911*, vol.-XIV, part I, para 618, p.502.

37. *Ludhiana D.G.1904*, vol.-XVA, p. 65.

38. Lucas, E. D., *op. cit.*, p. 72.

39. Singh, S. Gian, *op. cit.*, pp. 13 and 22.

desired form of profession. Naturally, they persistently attempted to acquire a few acres of village cultivable lands. In Sirsa many of them were so exclusively devoted to agriculture even before the establishment of British rule that they practically abandoned their traditional callings.<sup>40</sup> Now towards the close of the century the desire to raise their social status by acquiring a few acres of land continued to persist among these two groups of *kamins*. In Ludhiana, for example, tarkhans working as carpenters amassed 'great wealth' which they often invested in land.<sup>41</sup> In Lahore and Ferozepore they also became owners of village lands through purchases. Similarly lohars acquired a large tract of land in the *tahsils* of Nakodar and Phillaur in Jullundur district.<sup>42</sup>

This process of acquisition of land by these *kamins* represented a significant aspect of the rural economy of this period. Many of them were thrifty enterprising cultivators ready to invest their savings in land. Of all these *kamins*, Sikh tarkhans, often known as Ramgharias in the central districts claimed their Superior Status from one Sardar Jassa Singh,<sup>43</sup> son of a carpenter, who assumed political authority in the 18th century as the leader of the Ramgharia *misl* or confederacy with his headquarters at fort Ramgarh (Amritsar). They acquired lands, amassed wealth and became influential by serving Jassa Singh, Ranjit Singh and others during Sikh rule. Under British administration they continued their efforts to acquire more lands and to get themselves recognised *zamindars* in the rural society. They often abandoned their ancestral profession of a carpenter and solely devoted themselves to agriculture. This slow shift over to agriculture offered them an opportunity to raise their social status in the eyes of their fellow brothers. They also persistently endeavoured to keep themselves aloof from ordinary carpenters starting to look down upon their trade and seldom tried to maintain any social communion with them.<sup>44</sup>

But this process of acquisition of land was, however, greatly retarded with the enforcement of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act which did not recognise them as agricultural tribes. Consequently, they were virtually debarred from acquiring new lands at the beginning of the present century. As cultivators, many of these prosperous Sikh craftsmen were long known for their thrift and enterprising zeal and naturally the rejection of

40. *Sirsa S. R.* 1889, para 91, p. 104.

41. *Ludhiana D. G.* 1904, vol.-XVA, p. 65.

42. *Jullundur D. G.* 1904, vol.-XIVA, p. 104.

43. Bingley A. H., *The Sikhs* (Patiala, 1970). p. 59.

44. *Sirsa S. R.* 1884, para 91, p. 104.



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their claims as an agricultural tribe created a deep dissatisfaction in their minds.<sup>45</sup> Many experienced officers like Maynard and others realised the futility of this legal check; but the Government refused to consider their claims. This official refusal to include them as one of the agricultural tribes did not put a complete stop to this process of social mobility among the tarkhans, but simply gave it a new direction. Many took up the profession of a trader and set up shops in the countryside,<sup>46</sup> while few others earned much money in the railway workshops and other places away from the villages.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. Chamars :

As a village menial a chamar rendered valuable service to *zamindars*. He was commonly the tanner and leather-worker of the Punjab and in the more western parts, he was called *mochi*. But in the east of the Punjab he was more than a leather-worker; he was also the general *coolie* and field labour of the village. He performed the *begar* or such works as cutting grass, carrying wood and bundles, acting as watchman and the like; and he plastered house with mud whenever necessary. He took the hides of all dead cattle and the flesh of cloven-footed animals; he made and mended shoes, thongs for the cart, and whips and leather and above work; and above all, did an immense deal of hard work in the fields, each family supplying each cultivating family with the continuous labour, of a certain number of hands. All these he performed as village menial, receiving in return customary dues in the shape of a share of the produce at harvest.<sup>48</sup>

The dues of a chamar, when working as *sepi* (permanent *kamin*), were not the same in all the parts of the province. In Jullundur<sup>49</sup> he was remunerated by being given one-fortieth seer out of every maund of production, while in Montgomery he received two maunds of grain per well each year, one *topa* per head at each harvest, one day's cotton plucking during the season. The work of a chamar in Kulu was less onerous than in the rest of the province, since here *zamindars* often made for themselves from untanned leather the universal grain receptacle (*bori* or

45. *Annual Report on the Punjab Alienation of Land Act XIII of 1900 for the year 1905-06*, page 22.

46. Singh, Randhir. *op. cit.*, p. 93.

47. Singh, S. Gian, *op.cit.*, pp. 22 and 28.

48. Rose, H.A., *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Provinces*, vol. II, p. 147.

49. Grant J.A., *Monograph on the Leather Industries of the Punjab, 1891-92*, (Lahore, 1893), para 4, pp. 4-5.

*khalaru*). In Lahul, his profession was still more restricted as none used leather shoes commonly manufactured by him in the plains. In Kangra, in return for their service, *zamindars* allowed him to take *kamila* dye from *kamal* tree free of cost. The bark of *kaniar* tree, used for tanning was also freely given to him.<sup>50</sup>

During the period under review, changes took place in the form of payment to the chamars. As in the case of other *kamins*, they were often slowly deprived of their customary dues at harvest. It was found that 'free trade and competition' were 'gradually breaking through the old restrictions fixed by long established usage.' Thus 'the customary rule of *'haqq sep'* was being discarded in favour of the cash principles of ordinary business'.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly it was found that in Gujranwala and Jhelum the *sep* system of payment was dying out owing to high prices of grain.<sup>52</sup> In Ambala also it was gradually disappearing. In Jullundur the relationship between chamars and *zamindars* were sometimes so strained that often the chamars were not allowed to retain the skins of dead cattle which they commonly received as part of their customary dues in the past.<sup>53</sup> Similarly in Multan, with the decline of trade and industry in leather-works, chamars were very badly affected and they were consequently deprived of the customary payment.<sup>54</sup>

With this decline in their customary wages, their relationship with the *zamindars* also underwent a slow change. It was now occasionally marked by tension and open hostility. In Jullundur any 'dispute over rights or payments is liable to end in breach of the relationship' between cultivators and chamars and ultimately leading 'to strike and boycott against the cultivators until a satisfactory decision is reached.'<sup>55</sup> Similar cases of resistance were also coming in from the Chenab Canal Colony at the beginning of the present century.<sup>56</sup> But it would be wrong to assume that this was a universal phenomenon during the period under review. On the contrary, their attempts to flout the authority of the village proprietary body were often ineffectual. Their caste *panchayats* were frequently held

50. Mul Raj, Bhai, *An Economic Survey of the Haripur and Mangarh Taluqas of the Kangra District of the Punjab* (The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Village Survey No. 9, Lahore, 1933), p. 15.

51. Grant, J.A., *op. cit.*, para 3, p. 3.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Jullundur S.R. 1892*, para 54, p. 87.

54. Grant J.A., *op. cit.*, para 18, pp. 13-14.

55. Dass, Anchal, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

56. *Chenab Colony S.R. 1915*, para 169, p. 82.

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to protest against the high-handedness of *zamindars*; but the threats of the *zamindars* to refuse permission to the *kamins* to graze their cattle in the village waste and a fear of starvation soon brought them to terms.<sup>57</sup>

Their poor economic condition no doubt was another important factor in their quick submission to the village proprietary body. In a number of eastern and submontane districts they lived a miserable life and constituted perhaps 'the poorest section of the village community.' Their income scarcely exceeded 5 annas a day.<sup>58</sup> It obviously prompted them to borrow from *zamindars* whose land they cultivated as labourers or from *sahukars* at an exorbitant rate of interest.<sup>59</sup> They were often deeply indebted to the Khojas who advanced credit at a similarly high rate of interest in connection with their trade in leather works. The numerous village enquiries of the present century also indicated their universal indebtedness. In Gijhi (Rohtak), it was found that every family was in debt and in each case it was incurred in a scarcity for buying food. 'In most cases a part of the interest is paid at harvest time—but the principal and interest have now accumulated to hundreds of rupees in each case.'<sup>60</sup> Their indebtedness was equally widespread in most of the western districts of the province where *mochis*, due to their indebtedness at the hands of the Khojas, were compelled to sell their leather-works at a price fixed by their creditors. 'The result, of course, is that the *mochi* gets more and more involved in their meshes and finds it utterly impossible to extricate himself from their hands.'<sup>61</sup>

This unhappy economic condition of *chamars* was largely due to two factors : (1) the decline in their customary rates of wages which virtually constituted their main source of income in the rural society, and (2) the decline of the indigenous leather industry run by the *chamars* with the spread of the competitive principles of free trade and the opening up of communications which enabled even rural consumers towards the close of the century<sup>62</sup> to obtain their dressed leather from centres like Kanpur. Under these circumstances many of them found it convenient to take

57. Narain, Raj, *An Economic Survey of Gijhi—a village in the Rohtak District* (The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab village Survey No. 2, Lahore, 1932), p. 16.

58. Lucas, E. D., *op. cit.*, p. 60.

59. Note by J. R. Maconachie, Deputy Commissioner, Gurgaon, 17 August, 1887, Proceedings of Revenue and Agriculture Department (Famine Branch), December 1888, 1-24A.

60. Narain, Raj, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

61. Grant, A. J., *op. cit.*, para 18, p. 14.

62. *Ibid.*, para 18, p. 13.

increasingly to such occupations as weaving blankets and coarse cotton cloth. This weaving incidentally offered them a chance to raise their social status and naturally many of them resorted to it during the period under review.<sup>63</sup> Many of them also started trading in cattle.<sup>64</sup>

Cultivation of land, however, provided them with the largest employment opportunity. This shift to agriculture may be said to have started during Sikh rule; now in the closing years of the last century this process continued at a faster rate in the eastern districts of the province. Land was so plentiful that many chamars became cultivating tenants by giving up leather for agriculture.<sup>65</sup> Similarly in Rohtak and Karnal many of them were associated with agriculture as *sanghi*, deriving considerable income from it.<sup>66</sup>

Another interesting aspect of their occupational mobility was their movement towards the canal colonies in search of higher wages and better livelihood. In this part of the province few of them were confined 'to the traditional employment; the Colonisation Officer found at the beginning of the present century that they have generally immensely improved their condition, though it is doubtful whether in the future pressure of population they will be able to retain their advantages. At present, however, they are nearly all agriculturists and have numbers of cattle which many of them possess.'<sup>67</sup>

Thus at the beginning of the present century, we notice some changes occurring among chamars. Many of them found themselves placed at a disadvantageous position with the decline in the *sep* payment and the collapse of their leather trade. Many of them were deeply indebted and their ancestral occupation was often no longer remunerative. In many cases their relations with *zamindars* became strained. Naturally they were in search of higher wages elsewhere or alternative source of income. With this end in view, they often flocked to canal colonies or nearby towns or took up the cultivation of lands. This mobility created in them a great deal of the spirit of independence and new form of social aspirations which found an eloquent expression

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63. Ibbetson, Denzil, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

64. Dass, Anchal, *op. cit.*, 14.

65. Grant, A. J., *op. cit.*, para 5, p.5.

66. *Ibid.*, para 5, p. 6.

67. *Annual Report for the Chenab, Jhelum, Churian and Sohag Para Colonies, 1902-03*, Chenab Colony, para 12, p. 10.

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in many of the contemporary sayings :

*Sal-i-awwal sheikh budam,  
Sal-i-doyyam khan shudam,  
Ghalla gar arzan shawad,  
Imsal Sayyid mi-shawam.*

[The first year I was a Sheikh;  
the second year I became a Khan;  
this year if the price of provisions goes up,  
I shall become a Sayyid.]

### 5. Summary and conclusions :

It is, therefore, evident that the second half of the 19th century witnessed a great change in the position and status of the *kamins* of the Punjab. This is reflected in several changes in compensation (including a reduction in rates for customary tasks) and a growth of new tasks inside the village and out which provided additional sources of occupation and new types of work. It is also clear that artisans were leaving the villages for small *bazar* towns and cities where they received higher incomes for specialised work; they also often found better remuneration by migrating permanently and or temporarily to the canal colonies in central Punjab.

This period also witnessed a definite change in the relationship between the *kamins* and *zamindars*. Prior to this period their relationship was determined by customary rules and it was generally marked by a spirit of mutual dependence and understanding. Recently one modern authority in his Vilyatpur (a village in the Jullundur district) village study found that the 'tie between the families of the cultivators and the servants' was 'often of a clearly dependent one from the *sepidars*' [*kamins*] point of view.'<sup>68</sup> But this view, however, does not hold good for the entire Punjab. *Zamindars* universally depended on these *kamins* for their invaluable service and regarded them as an integral part of the village social system. Their relationship was generally marked by a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. Brandeth, Settlement Officer of the Ferozepore district, thus gave a graphic account of this aspect of their relationship obtaining during the early years of British rule :

I have never known any disputes about the payment of these dues since I came to the district, it is so much the interest of all parties to be on good terms, that they never quarrel about them, besides a cultivator often pays a little more or a little less according

68. Kessinger, Tom G., *Vilyatpur 1848-1968 : Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village* (University of California Press, 1974), p. 57.

to the manner in which his work has been done, and I believe a clause in 'wajiboolurj' enabling the *kamins* to institute summary suits against the cultivators would tend rather to promote dispute than otherwise...<sup>69</sup>

This form of relationship, as we have already seen, did not last long. In Rohtak the Settlement Officer admitted in the late 1870s that the menials were not on good terms as formerly with the *zamindars*, and the cause of bitterness was the demand of higher wages by them. The higher wage rates prevailing particularly in the canal colonies tended to make them increasingly dissatisfied with the old customary rates.<sup>70</sup>

This change in the relationship between *zamindars* and *kamins* was no doubt largely due to a general decline in the *kamiana* at the harvest. Actually towards the close of the century *zamindars* frequently attempted to cut down their wages and the following tables illustrate the point.

**Table 9 (a)**

Decline in *kamiana* deduction in Hoshiarpur district

Year	<i>Kamiana</i> deduction in per cent.
1	2
1883	10
1915	4

Source : *Hoshiarpur S. R. 1915*, p. 25.

**Table 9 (b)**

Decline in *kamiana* deduction in five *tahsils* of Ambala district

Year	<i>Kamiana</i> deduction in five <i>tahsils</i> in per cent.				
	Jagadhri	Rupar	Kharar	Ambala	Naraingarh
1	2	3	4	5	6
At the settlement of 1882-1887	12-1/2	10	10	10 and 12	10
At the settlement of 1915-1920	... + A) 10 B) 8	+ A) 10 B) 8	+ A) 10 B) 8	8	10

Source : *Ambala S. R. 1915*, p. 21.

It is evident from these two tables that the wages of the *kamins* generally declined in two densely populated submontane districts towards the

+ A) Irrigated. B) Unirrigated.

69. *Ferozepore S. R. 1859*, para 191, p. 63.

70. *Rohtak D. G. 1910*, vol.-IIIA, pp. 143-144.

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close of the century. In Ambala this decline was particularly noticeable in the unirrigated tracts of this district where cultivation of land did not require participation of these *kamins*. In Hoshiarpur, however, the rate of decline was even greater in course of the next twenty-five years following 1883. This was no doubt largely due to steady fragmentation of holdings towards the close of the century.<sup>71</sup> This made the employment of the *kamins* unremunerative; *zamindars* now performed many of the labourious jobs hitherto kept reserved for the *kamins*; and when they were appointed, they received a lower rate of wages. This steady decline in the *kamiana* payment, particularly in the background of a general price rise, must have deeply affected their economic condition. Besides, *zamindars* preferred to pay rates determined by annual contract to customary rates payable year after year. This was particularly noted by the District Officer of Ludhiana in 1883, while he read through the village revenue records. The recurrence of the conditions relating to annual contracts in the village records suggests that the practice had been in vogue for some time.

The result has been that ...in some villages there are no customary allowances or services at all; and, when cultivator has any work to be done by one of the class, he pays for it in grain or cash. In many villages too the proprietor will not allow the *chamar* to have the skins, as the price of leather has risen very high in late years; and money is to be made out of them.<sup>72</sup>

Under these circumstances the traditional caste callings of these *kamins* gradually became unremunerative. Many of them thought in terms of abandoning their caste occupation and of taking to other profession. A distinct tendency among them was to move towards the canal districts like Jhang, Multan and Gujranwala where an increased demand of labour due to a sudden expansion of cultivation led to a steady rise of wages towards the close of the century. Many of them also migrated to towns which offered newer avenues of employment. This tendency was particularly noticeable among the *tarkhans*.

A considerable section of *kamins* also found employment in the reclamations of waste lands which they undertook on an increasing scale. This search for an alternative employment in the form of ownership and direct cultivation of land was strengthened by social consideration. During Sikh rule and also later some of these *kamins*, particularly the *chamars*

71. Bhalla, R. L., *An Economic Survey of Bairampur in the Hoshiarpur District* (Lahore, 1922), p. 33.

72. *Ludhiana S. R.*, 1884, para 128, p. 130.

were universally hated by zamindars for their unclean caste callings and they under the circumstances considered ownership of land and abandonment of their old occupation a sure means of acquiring an elevated social and ritual status.<sup>73</sup>

This process of acquisition of land no doubt represented a healthy aspect of the rural economy. Many of them were recognised as thrifty enterprising groups of cultivators and they were also found investing their capital and labour in the cultivation of the newly acquired holdings. Consequently, transfers of lands to those agriculturists, commanding greater capital and resources constituted a healthy development in the agrarian economy of the Punjab during the second half of the 19th century. It is, however, extremely difficult to measure accurately the extent of land acquired by these different artisan and menial groups. It is evident from the settlement reports that, particularly in the eastern districts like Sirsa and Gurgaon where a vast tract of land remained practically uncultivated at the commencement of British rule, many of these artisans acquired the same from the inefficient proprietors like the Meos, Rajputs and Gujars. This process of lands was also reported in the enquiry conducted by Thorburn, Commissioner and Superintendent of Rawalpindi division, towards the close of the century.

**Table 10**

Alienated land held by self-cultivating artisans in four circles of Sialkot, Gujranwala and Shahpur districts in acres.

Name of the circle	Lands held by artisans in acres	Total area held by self-cultivating mortgages and owners by purchase other than money-lenders
1	2	3
Charkhri (Sialkot)	131	358
Charkhri (Gujranwala)	417	1,412
Jhelum-Bhera (Shahpur)	2	398
Hill Circles (Shahpur)	315	583
Total	865	2,751

Source : *Report on Agricultural Indebtedness and Transfers of Land*, General Report, para 74, p. 175, Proceedings of Revenue and Agricultural Department (Land Revenue Branch), November 1898, 3-22A.

73. *Sirsa S. R. 1884*, para 125, p. 184.



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It is, therefore, evident that acquisition of lands by different artisan and menial groups represented a significant process of change going on over the years. But this phenomenon does not seem to have occurred on a large scale throughout this period. The reasons for this are various. In the first place, acquisition of land by these artisans required sufficient amount of capital which they often did not possess. Their rate of wages was not sufficiently high to save a part of it and consequently to invest the same in the purchase of land. Many tarkhans and lohars no doubt received better wages in some of the central and submontane districts, but their number was too insignificant to merit any special attention. On the other hand, the bulk of these artisan communities were very poor and often deeply indebted at the hands of the village *sahukars*. Naturally their poor economic condition, coupled with their widespread indebtedness, prevented them from acquiring lands on a large scale. Finally, the official policy also greatly checked the process of acquisition of lands by these artisans and menials. In this connection the Land Alienation Act of 1901 deserves our attention.

Under the provision of this Act, village artisans were categorically denied the status of agricultural tribe and hence they were automatically debarred from acquiring new lands in village. This legal disability imposed by the Act particularly affected the two sub-groups of the tarkhan and kumhar communities, viz., the Sikh tarkhans known as the Ramgharias and Bagri kumhars of the eastern Punjab. They were long regarded as thrifty and enterprising groups of cultivators and had acquired a considerable tract of land in the last century. Naturally, they felt their exclusion from the land market very badly. They applied to the Government for their inclusion in the list of notified agricultural tribes. The Government, however, finally agreed to recognise the claims of the Bagri-kumhars while turning down the same of the tarkhans.

## The Maratha-Sikh Treaty of 1785

GANDA SINGH

With the arrival of Emperor Shah Alam II in the protection of Mahadji Sindhia, it became necessary for him to protect the Imperial Capital and its neighbourhood and to repel the incursions of the Sikhs that were threatening them. With the Emperor's approbation, it was Mahadji's intention to place His Majesty in the fort of Delhi, and, then, to lead an expedition against the Sikhs. But he could not leave the siege of Agra, and then of Dig, into hands other than his own. He, therefore, entrusted the management of his affairs at Delhi to one of his lieutenants, Ambaji Ingle, and on the 19th of January, 1785, got him appointed the *Faujdar* of the 28 *Mahals* of Sonapat, etc., bordering on the Sikh territories. This part of the country was then in a disturbed state. Ambaji feared opposition from the Sikhs on the one hand, and from the Rohelas of Ghausgarh on the other. But as Zabita Khan was not keeping good health, there was very little fear of disturbance from his side. Moreover, his eldest son Ghulam Qadir Khan had been for years under the protection of Mahadji Sindhia himself and had been lately reconciled and sent back to his father. This had cemented their cordial relations. The death of Zabita Khan on January 27, 1785, however, left no cause of anxiety for the Maratha Chief, because a protege of Mahadji himself was now to succeed him and he could be easily brought to terms. It was the Sikhs alone whose presence in the neighbourhood of Delhi was a source of anxiety to Mahadji Sindhia. Ambaji's main mission, therefore, was to protect the capital from them and to contract a friendly alliance with their Sardars so as to remove all danger to the Imperial territories from that quarter.

While conveying to Mr. Hastings at Calcutta the news of the death of Zabita Khan, Major James Brown wrote from Dig on February 1st, 1785, "It is probable that Scindiah will support him [Ghulam Qadir] in the succession on certain terms. At present the Seiks are likely to interfere, their Grand Camp [the *Dal Khalsaji*] being in that district, and this may produce hostilities between them and the Marathas." Any interference on the part of the Sikhs in the succession of Ghulam Qadir to the office of his father was feared to cause a disturbance in the peaceful administration of the capital and its neighbourhood. Mahadji, there-

#### THE MARATHA-SIKH TREATY OF 1785

fore, could ill-afford to displease the Sikh Sardars. Lieutenant James Anderson, the British Resident with Mahadji Sindhia, tells us in his letter dated 1st February, 1785, addressed to Warren Hastings, "He has lately dismissed the *Vakeels* from the Seiks with presents to their Chiefs and I understand he has offered to take 5,000 of them into his service." [*For. Depts. Secret Consult.*, 19th February, 1785.]

Mahadji could see that as long as the Sikhs were free to carry their incursions unopposed into the territories under his protection he could not establish his own government successfully. Nor could he, without befriending the Sikhs, reduce the power of the various Mughal *Jagirdars*, amongst whom a great part of the country had been parcelled out. He, therefore, wished to divert the attention of the Sikhs from his side. There was only one other side in this part of the country to which the Sikhs could be turned, and that was of the Nawab Vizir of Oudh. [*Lieut. James Anderson to the Hon'ble John Macpherson, Governor-General*, 23rd March, 1785.]

The first intelligence of the Nawab Vizir of Oudh apprehending "a combination to be formed betwixt Scindia and the Seiks of a nature hostile to the Vizier" was forwarded from Fatehgarh on the 4th February, 1785, by Colonel Sir John Cumming to Major General Hibbert, the Commander-in-Chief, on the authority of a letter from Major Palmer, the Resident at Lucknow. "The great camp of the Seiks" had "passed the Ganges into the Vizier's country" in the second week of January and had plundered Chandausi on the 3rd Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199 Hijri, 15th January, 1785.<sup>1</sup>

On the 12th Rabi-ul-awwal, 24th January, while the Sikh Sardars Baghel Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Gurdit Singh, Sawan Singh, Bhag Singh and others were encamped near Benampur and were waiting for Sardar Karam Singh Nirmala, letters were received from the army of Mahadji Sindhia. According to Major Browne's informant, "they left the Army and went under the trees where they had consultation and read the letters. We hear from some of them that Baghel Singh had

1. *Intelligence of the Seik Army, 4th Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199; Major James Browne to Warren Hastings, 22nd January, 1785.*

Raja Jagannath, the *Amil* of Rohelkhand, "affirmed to me," wrote Sir John Cumming to the Hon'ble John Macpherson from Anupshahr on February 27, 1785, "that Moraudabad has not been touched and that the depredations were confined solely to the towns of Chandaucey and Sumbul. He acknowledged that the bazaars of these two places were pillaged and burnt and that a considerable numbers of bullocks loaded with plunder found there had been carried across the river." [*Secret Consult.*, March 22, 1785.]

advised that the plunder should be left to the other side of the Jumna and...ten or fifteen thousand horses, being crossed again over the river, should go plundering as far as Bareilly." [Intel. of the Seik Army, 12th Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199; Major Browne to Hastings, 28th January, 1785.]

When the Sikh horsemen returned after examining the fords for crossing the river, Sardars Jassa Singh, Gurdit Singh and Baghel Singh held consultations and decided "that they must with expedition cross the river and plunder some place. At this time the news arrived that Nawab Zabita Khan was dead. Upon hearing this, Baghel Singh said that it was proper to cross the river towards Ghousghurra [Ghausgarh]."

On the 20th Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199, 1st February, 1785, while the Sikh Army was encamped four *kos* to the west of the river opposite to the "Sebulghurrah" Ghat fourteen *kos* from Sitabad, Ambaji arrived with letters from Rao Partap Singh of Macheri and from Raju Mall, the *Vakil* of Baghel Singh in Mahadji's Camp. The following is the substance of Partap Singh's letter :-

"The expulsion of the Turks will be easily effected, and it is a business in which your religion is concerned. If you are desirous of joining in the attempt, give immediate information, so that, having settled the matter with Scindia, I may send the necessaries. Many particulars will be told you by Hurjee Ambazee which you will consider as true. I am going to Apajee to the neighbourhood of Delhi. Where you may appoint, I will have an interview. Scindia is turning his thoughts to the conquest of new countries."

And the *Vakil* of Baghel Singh wrote to his master :-

"Having settled all negotiations with Scindia in the firmest manner, I have received my dismissal and am coming with Apajee. As soon as the army arrives in the neighbourhood of Delhi, I shall quit it and being soon arrived at your presence will inform you of Scinda's design."

[Intell. of the Seik Army 21st Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199, 2nd Feb., 1785; Major Browne to Warren Hastings, dated Deig 9th Feby., 1785.]

On the following day, 2nd February, 1785, news arrived that Sardar Karam Singh, Sardar Dulcha Singh, Sardar Rai Singh and other Sikh Chiefs had arrived from the neighbourhood of Ghausgarh and were encamped four or five *kos* from the Khalsa Army. Immediately Baghel Singh went for an interview with Sardar Karam Singh Nirmala and "shewed him the letters of Scindia and Raja Himmudt Behadur, and the *arzee* of Raju Mall Vakeel and the letter of Row Pertaub Singh of Machree addressed to him and informed him of Hurzee Ambazie's

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arrival and negotiation.” [James Browne to Hastings, 9th February, 1785, with enclosures.]

“Having written an answer to the letter of Row Pertaub Singh, they sent off Hurjee Ambajee” on the 5th February. The answer mentioned “that they will first have an interview with him, and, then, agreeable to what he may advise, join him with the greatest pleasure.”

On Sunday the 6th February, 1785, the Camp of the *Dal Khalsaji*, or the Grand Army of the Sikhs, moved to the neighbourhood of Daryapur about two kos from the Ghat of Maheshgarh. Hearing of the projected invasion of his territories by the Sikhs and finding himself incapable of opposing the invincible *Dal*, Ghulam Qadir Khan deputed Haji Hussain Khan to wait upon the Sikh Sardars Jassa Singh and others, offering to pay the usual tribute for *Raakhi* (protection) and *Karah Prasad* and requesting them “to remove their Army from his country and not to ruin the villages.” [Intell. of the Seik Army, 26th Rabi-ul-awwal, 1199, 7th February, 1785.]

This surrender of Ghulam Qadir Khan added to the anxieties of Mahadji Sindhia and alarmed him about the fate of the Imperial Capital and the neighbouring territories at the hands of the Sikhs. He was further alarmed at the movements of the British troops under the command of Colonel Sir John Cumming who had, infact, marched out of Fatehgarh to defend the Nawab Vizir’s territories from the incursion of the *Khalsa Dal*. Negotiations were, therefore, started with the Colonel with a view to ascertaining the intentions of the Company’s Government and to assure him of his own goodwill towards them.

Upon the arrival of Colonel Sir John Cumming at Anupshahr, a Maratha *Vakil*, says the Colonel in his despatch dated February 27, waited on him with a letter from Malhar Bapu, “a person of great trust and confidence with Scindia and who rents all the districts situated betwixt Delhi and this part of His Excellency the Vizier’s dominions.” The letter assured him, as did the *Vakil* verbally, that the Marathas had ordered all their officials to afford every possible assistance in point of supplies to the British troops, whether encamped on their frontiers or passing through any part of their districts. “Understanding that the march of the troops from Futtygurrh has alarmed Scindia and the Mahratta Government,” Sir John Cumming continues, “I have judged it necessary, both in my letter to Mulhar Bapoo and in my conversation with his *Vakil* to give the strongest assurances of the friendship and attachment of our Government towards the Mahrattas. I have begged him to inform Scindia that the sole object of the march of this detachment was the defence of the Vizier’s

frontiers from the incursion of the Seiks. And I have added that should the Seiks come down in such force that the Mahratta troops on this frontier should be unable to repel them, I am ready to assist them against the Seiks as a proof of the friendship of our Government towards the Pateal," provided the Marathas on their own part also "would give a proof of the sincerity of their friendship towards us by attacking some bodies of the Seiks that had lately made an incursion into Rohilcund and now hovered on our frontier. And I concluded with assuring them that whenever the Seiks should be compelled to return to their own Country, and we should be satisfied that no further danger was to be apprehended from these plunderers, I should return to Futtighurr with troops I brought with me from thence."<sup>2</sup> [*Secret Consult.*, March 22, 1785; *John Cumming to John Macpherson*, 27th March, 1785; *Secret Consult.*, April 12, 1785.]

This stroke of Cumming's diplomacy succeeded in bringing about a

2. This assurance of Colonel Cumming to the Marathas was not considered politic by Major General Hibbert, the Commander-in-Chief, who thus expressed his opinion to the Governor-General and the members of the Supreme Council, Secret Dept., in his letter of the 4th April, 1785 :—

"With respect to the assurance of the amity of this Government given by Colonel Cumming and his offers of co-operating with him to expel the Seiks, I suppose he must have some authority for judging that they will be agreeable to the intentions of the Board. I shall only observe that, however, prudent it may be to preserve the friendship of Scindia, it will not, I think, be politic to assist him against the other powers to the westward, for the more he is involved in troubles with them, the more will his present schemes of dominion be retarded, and the less leisure will he have to meditate hostile designs against the Vizier. And it may be apprehended that should he acquire universal power over the Countries held in the name of the King towards which he is advancing with hasty strides, his ambition may lead him to pursue further scheme of conquest. At least he will become, if not actually a troublesome and dangerous enemy, a neighbour whose designs must always be suspected and guarded against."

The Board agreed with the Commander-in-Chief and warned Sir John Cumming in their letter dated Fort William the 9th April, 1785, against giving effect to his assurance to the Marathas.

"We have very maturely considered the subject of these letters and think it necessary to restrain you from giving effect to the offer which you have made to Scindia until you shall have received our sanction and authority for that purpose. We do not wish to interfere in Scindiah's disputes with other powers to the westward. We are not sure that it would not be most politic to allow them their fullest operation."

[*Secret Consult.*, 12th April, 1785.]

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rupture between the Marathas and the Sikhs and the two came to grips in the neighbourhood of Panipat. To prove to the satisfaction of Cumming the sincerity of their friendship for the Company's Government, the troops under Ambaji and Malhar Bapu attacked a body of about five hundred Sikhs, killed two hundred of them and took seventy horses. This unwarranted attack on the part of the Marathas under Malhar Bapu and Ambaji, while their master Mahadji Sindhia was making overtures for a friendly alliance through Rao Partap Singh of Macheri and Raju Mall Vakil of Sardar Baghel Singh, caused great resentment among the Sikh Sardars. They retired beyond Panipat to their own frontier and drew together a force of twenty thousand cavalry, a body of infantry and a few guns. They then attacked the town of Panipat, plundered and burnt it and cut off an entire battalion of sepoys that were in garrison there. This battalion was one of those formerly commanded by Sumro, and now in the service of Sindhia.

While conveying this intelligence to the Hon'ble John Macpherson, Sir John Cumming wrote from Anupshahr on March 27, 1785, "I have also information of their having cut off another battalion, but the Maratha Vakeels not admitting the truth of this last intelligence, I do not give it as altogether certain. I consider it a point of utmost consequence to engage these two powers in hostility and no endeavours have been wanting on my part to effect it." "By engaging Ambajee and Mulhar Bapoo in hostilities with the Seiks," he wrote two days later, "I am happy to observe that I have chalked out sufficient employment for their forces at present." [*Col. Cumming to Major General Hibbart*, 18th March, 1785, *Secret Consult.*, 9th April, 1785; *Cumming to Macpherson*, 27th March, 1785; *Secret Consult.*, 12th April, 1785; *Cumming to Macpherson*, 29th March, 1785.]

The Sikhs had now lost all faith in the sincerity of Mahadji's negotiations for a friendly alliance. They needed no proof of his hostile attitude towards themselves, as it had already expressed itself through the behaviour of his lieutenants. They also perhaps saw in this behaviour the hidden intentions of Mahadji to possess himself of some of the Sikh territories, as he himself later on confessed it to Lieut. Anderson on the 13th April, as one of the objects of the Treaty of 31st March. To safeguard their interests, therefore, they chose to ally themselves with the East India Company and opened friendly negotiations with them.

Having been assured of the friendly intentions of the Company through the messages of Sir John Cumming to himself in the last week of February, Mahadji turned his attention to the Sikhs and the Mughal

officials and jagirdars at the capital.<sup>3</sup> So far his measures in this quarter had involved him in much additional expense without any substantial advantage in return. He found that the system pursued by Mirza Najjaf Khan, the *Wazir-ul-Mumalik* at Delhi, and his successors had parcelled out in jagirs a great part of the country amongst their friends and followers. He could not, therefore, derive any benefit from his position there without their resumption. But it was not an easy task and could not be hastily materialized. His impoverished finances, however, left him with no alternative. As a preparative to a more general measure, he was induced, to begin with, "to take possession of jagheers of the princes, with a promise to pay them an equivalent in money. But the step was so violently resented by the King that Scindia was forced to recede from it." "In the meantime the Mughal Chiefs," according to Anderson's despatch of 23rd March from Sindhia's Camp near Agra, "have had sufficient cause of alarm on this head, and it was suspected that some of the principal amongst them have entered into a secret confederacy with the Seiks for an eventual junction with them in case of the resumption of their jagheers."

The surrender of Ghulam Qadir to the Sikhs and detachment of several of the Mughal Chiefs, for a combination with them hastened the counsels of Mahadji for a speedy reconciliation with the Sikh Sardars.

Ambaji by now had the experience of an armed conflict with them and of the heavy loss that their retaliation had inflicted upon him in cutting off a battalion of sepoys at Panipat. Cumming told Anderson on March 31st that "they think of nothing but the Seiks... The Seiks have again crossed the Jumna and Ambajee and Mulhar are not able to look them in the face, which they at last from necessity confessed to me."

[*Secret Consult.*, 12th April, 1785.]

Fearful of the continued retaliation from the Sikhs and further humiliation at their hands, which might bring him to disgrace in the eyes of his master, Ambaji actively busied himself in the last week of March, 1785, to effect a reconciliation with them, and sought the mediation of Maharao Partap Singh of Macheri to bring it to a successful conclusion. Partap Singh, as we know, had already been in correspondence with the Sikhs and had invited them to join hands with Mahadji Sindhia for "the expul-

3. The first intelligence of Scindia's negotiations for an engagement with the Sikhs, for active assistance with troops, whenever he may require them, for a certain subsidy' was received by Major James Browne on March 6th, and he transmitted it to the Hon'ble John Macpherson on the 8th in his letter from Agra. [*Secret Consult.*, 5th April, 1785.]



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sion of the Turks" and "the conquest of new countries" from the Nawab Vizir of Oudh, the Mughal Chiefs of Delhi and the Rajas of Jaipur and Marwar. Rao Partap Singh and Ambaji, marched northwards and held consultations with the Sikh Sardars at Bakhtawarpur, 13 miles north of Delhi, from 27th March to 31st, and the following Treaty was concluded between Ambaji and the Sikh Sardars:

COPY OF THE TREATY CONCLUDED BETWEEN  
RAJA AMBAJI INGLE AND THE CHIEFS OF THE SIKHS,  
31ST MARCH, 1785.

Between this party (Raja Ambaji) and the Chiefs Bughel Sing Bahadur, Kurrum Sing Bahadur, Dooljah Sing, Bhak Sing, Dewan Sing, Baak Singh Dilowalah, Gohir Sing and the other Chiefs of the *Khalsajee* (the Seik Government) in friendship with the above mentioned Chiefs, an unity of Interests and Friendship has been established on oath, through the intervention of Maha Row Purtap Sing Bahadur.

The friends and enemies and the prosperity and adversity of each are mutual. Not the smallest degree of jealousy or difference subsist between us; and God is witness that there shall be no deviation.

The Seik Government from a consideration of the firm friendship that is established agree to forego their exactions of *Raakee*, and this party, from the share he now takes in their interest, agrees to go himself in person or depute some other to his master the Maha Rajah (Sindia) in order to promote the settlement of the objects of the Seik Chiefs in regard to a provision for their expenses &c., and whatever may be settled by the Maha Rajah shall be duly performed.

Of whatever either on this side or that side of the Jumna, independent of the Royal Territories, may be taken in concert with each other from the Hindoos and Mussulmans, one third shall be given to the Seik Chiefs together with other points settled for them.

Marching and halting and other points, great and small, shall be settled with the mutual consent of the parties.

The contracting parties shall unite their Forces to repress any disturbance that may be excited by their enemies.

Written on the 19th Jummadi awal, of the 28th year of the Reign, corresponding with the 31st day of March, 1785 A.D.

A true translation from the copy given to me by Mahajee Sindhia.

James Anderson,

Rest. wt. Mahajee Sindia.<sup>4</sup>

4. *Foreign Dept. Secret Consult.*, 3rd May, 1785.

On the conclusion of Treaty, Ambajee sent it on to Mahadji Sindhia for his approbation. Mahadji desired him to come up personally to his camp, and he arrived there on the night of the 10th April, 1785, [*Major Palmer to the Governor General and James Anderson to the Same*, both dated 11th April, 1785; *For. Dept. Secret Consult.*, 26th April, 1785.]

In the meantime Lieut. James Anderson, the Resident with Mahadji Sindhia, Colonel Sir John Cumming, the officer commanding the detachment of the Company's troops on the frontier, and Major Palmer, the Resident at Lucknow, had been reporting to the Government at Calcutta the news and their views regarding the Treaty. They saw in its materialization a danger to the political interests of the East India Company and to the territories of their friend the Nawab Vizir of Oudh. Therefore, they directed all their efforts towards its nullification by whatever means it could be brought about.

Lieut. James Anderson waited on Mahadji Sindhia on Wednesday, the 13th April, to have "some satisfactory explanations in regard to his late negotiations with the Seiks." "He immediately acquiesced," wrote Anderson on the next day, "and having caused the original treaty to be produced and read, he proceeded to make some remarks upon it. The first article, he observed, wherein the friends and enemies of each are specified to be mutual, ought to be considered by us as full refutation of any insidious reports, that might have spread, of its evil tendency towards us. As to the other articles, he said, he had two objects in view from them; the one was by aiding the party of the Seiks, with whom he had formed the treaty, against their enemies in the state, to possess himself, in virtue of their agreement of partition, of great part of their country; and the second was to avail himself of their assistance in the reduction of the Jeypore and Marwar Rajahs, who had of late withheld their tribute from him. ... I mentioned to him, however, that the specification of the Hindus and Mussulmans on this and that side of the Jumna might be liable to wrong interpretations, and I thought it would be better if stated in absolute and irrelative manner.

"He added that as he was answerable for the peaceable behaviour of the Seiks towards the Vizier as the ally of his friends the English, so he expected that we should be answerable for the conduct of the Vizier towards him. ...

"Mahajee made uncommon solicitude to vindicate himself against the insidious reports which had been propagated against him, and to assert the warmth of his friendship for the English. Possibly his fears, excited by the conduct of Colonel Cumming, may have had some effect over him on this occasion. ...

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"These two [objects of the treaty as given out by Mahadji] are strongly supported by probability, for the Rajahs of Jeypore and Marwar have both of them for many years past shewed an open contempt for his authority, and his resentment against the former has been heightened by his violation of all the terms of agreement into which he had entered with him last December, and of which the exigency of Sindia's affairs at that time prevented his enforcing the performance. Besides a report, and seemingly well founded, has of late prevailed that these Rajahs, from their apprehension of Sindia's enmity, have, with a view to defeat the effects of it, been endeavouring to contract an alliance with the Seiks, and to counteract this scheme must have been a very prevalent motive with Sindia for hastening his treaty with them. In regard to his aiding the extensive divisions of the Seiks, however extravagant it may appear, it must be allowed to suit admirably with the crafty policy, by which he has hitherto pursued his objects here. The prosecution of a plan of this nature is at all events much more probable than that of his joining with them in open opposition to us." [James Anderson to Macpherson, 14th April, 1785; *Secret Consult.*, 3rd May, 1785.]

On another occasion it was suggested to Sindhia by Lieut. Anderson to include in the Sikh Treaty the English and the Vizier as his friends and allies, and, instead of specifying the conquests to be made on this and that side of the Jumna, it should be absolutely expressed "whatever new conquest might be made." [Anderson to Macpherson, 28th April, 1785; *Secret Consult.*, 12th May, 1785.]

A few days later Sardar Dulcha Singh also arrived in the camp of Mahadji Sindhia to settle personally the various other points with him on behalf of the Sikh Sardars. But he was surprised to find the deceit practised upon them by Mahadji. "His original proposals communicated to them verbally by Ambajee were that on relinquishing their demand of *Raakee*, he would confer on them a jaghier of ten lacs annually, and that whatever countries they might jointly conquer should be divided in a certain proportion between them [one third being the share of the Sikhs]. In place of these terms he now amended that they should relinquish their *Raakee*, that they should unite their forces with him for the conquest of the territories of those Seik Chiefs with whom they were at variance; that as he did not mean to take any share of the conquests himself, they should consider his cession of the whole as an equivalent for the jaghier, and that, instead of general conquests [with particular reference to Aligarh] that he had proposed to them, he had now expressly excluded them from the territories of the Vizir and the

Company, with whom he was in strict friendship." But Sardar Dulcha Singh was not prepared to agree to these amended terms. Mahadji, therefore, detained him in his Camp till the signatures of the other Sardars had been subscribed to the new Definitive Treaty. [*Anderson to Macpherson*, 10 May, 1785; *Secret Consult.*, 26th May, 1785.]

The following is the text of the Definitive Treaty of the 10th May, 1785.

**The Definitive Treaty of 10th May, 1785**

The Chiefs of the Khalsa with a force of 5,000 horse being united in connection with the forces with the victorious army shall receive allowances and a jaghire of 10 lacs of rupees according to the following particulars.

Of this Jaghire 7½ lacs of rupees are in the neighbourhood of Karnal and 2½ from the country of the Sircar, and they shall attend in union, and besides their allowances and Jaghire, the Sircar shall have authority over the whole dependency of Karnal and the country without interference. And if in the authority of the dependency, the authority [? income] should be less than this engagement, something shall instead, therefore, be granted from the Sircar. In case the army of the said Chiefs should be summoned to the Sircar before they have authority and possession in the Jaghire, half a rupee shall be paid from the Sircar for each horseman after they be recorded. And after possession and full authority, no claim of pay for the sepoys shall be attended to. For supporting themselves on the Jaghire and considering their union to be finer than a hair, let them employ themselves in the obedience to orders and let them prevent their people from taking the *Raakee* in the circuit of the royal place and in the possessions of the Sircar, and by no means let any disagreement remain in future.

I am in friendship with the Chiefs of the English Company and with the Nawab Vizier, let there never be any injury offered to their country.

In this agreement God is between us, so no deviation shall ever happen.

Written the 29th Jamadie-as-sani at Muttrajee.

A True Copy,

Sd. James Anderson.

During his detention in the Camp of Mahadji Sindhia, Sardar Dulcha Singh from necessity agreed to the term of the treaty, but he was irritated at the unfriendly treatment that he received at his hands and at the tone of superiority that had been assumed by him. He, therefore, sent

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a *Vakil* in the garb of a merchant to Lieutenant James Anderson, the Company's Resident in the Camp. The *Vakil* saw Anderson's *Maulavi*, the confidential clerk, on the 9th May, and "complained bitterly of the deceit, which had been practised upon them by Sindia...Duljah Singh, he said being at present in the power of Sindia, had from necessity yielded to these terms, but he declared that as they had discovered clearly the insidious scope of Sindia's designs, they were determined not to adhere to the Treaty. And as Sindia had insinuated that in case of their disagreement, the English would join with him against them, he wished to know what" the real intentions of the English' were in such an event. He concluded by observing that if the English were desirous of connection with them, he would immediately procure letters...with the offers of friendship from several of their Chiefs' for the Resident.

As in the opinion of Lieut. Anderson, agreeable to the views of his masters, it was "more favourable to the interests of the Company that they should continue to be disunited" he directed his *Maulavi* to inform the Sikh *Vakil*, "that the Seik Chiefs may rest perfectly assured that it is not our intention to take any part with him [Sindhia] against them." He regarded the intercourse of friendship by letters between the Seik Sardars and the Company's Government "extremely proper," but as his residence in Sindhia's camp rendered it impolitic to become the channel of this correspondence," he suggested "that it should be managed through Major Palmer," the Resident at Lucknow. [*Lt. Anderson to Macpherson*, 10 May, 1785, *Secret Consult.*, 26th May, 1785.]

The other Sikh Sardars, on hearing of the treatment meted out to their ambassador Sardar Dulcha Singh in the form of his forcible detention in Sindhia's camp, were also disconcerted and they decided to break away with Mahadji, as no reliance could any longer be placed on his promises.

They renewed their negotiation with Colonel Sir John Cumming, the officer commanding, the Company's detachment on the Vizir's frontier. The letters of Sardars Gurdit Singh and Baghel Singh forwarded to the Governor-General on May 4th, 1785, exposed to him the anti-English tendencies of Sindhia and his offer of share of six annas in rupee from the territories of the Company (evidently those of the Vizir under their protection) that might fall into their joint possession. The Sardars offered to have an alliance with the Company, if the Company wished, and said "if you will make friendship and alliance with the Chiefs of the Khalsa, know us also on our part to be inclined to your friendship." [*For : Dept. Secret Consult.*, 26th May, 1785.]

In the meantime Sir John Cumming had received the views of the

Government at Calcutta for his guidance in regard to the negotiations from the Sikh Sardars in reply to his previous communications on the subject. They had written to him on the 19th April, 1785, 'it is certainly not for the interest either of the Company or the Vizier's Government that the Chiefs of the Sikh tribe should form any friendly connection with the Mahrattas. On the contrary a disunion between them is much to be desired, and if any assurance to the Seiks of our determination not to interfere in such disputes could foment or add to them, such assurances ought to be conveyed.' [For. Dept. Secret Consult., 19th April, 1785.]

Sir John Cumming could now clearly see that the Sikhs had lost faith in the earnestness of Sindhia's alliance with them, and if there were anything that could keep the two together, it was the fear in the minds of the Sikhs that "in case of disagreement with him, the English would join with him against them. If he could remove this fear, even without committing the Company to an alliance with the Sikhs, the object of keeping the two in disunion and hostility to one another could be easily gained. He, therefore, wrote to the Hon'ble John Macpherson, the Governor-General, on the 9th May, 1785, "The bad tendency of this is so obvious and striking that, though I shall not write to the [Sikh] Chiefs, I shall, in conformity with your ideas, give them privately the strongest assurances that under no circumstances shall we take any part against them, provided they on their part will abstain from depredations on the Vizier's provinces. I shall adopt the same private mode of encouraging an opinion, which they already entertain, that the success of the Mahratta schemes on this side of India may eventually prove fatal to their power and independence." [For. Dept. Secret Consult., 26th May, 1785.]

In their letter of 26th May, 1785, from Fort Willam, the Governor-General and Council wrote to Colonel Cumming, "We approve of the assurances that you propose to convey to the Seik Chiefs of our determination not to take part against them in the event of a rupture between them and Mahajee Sindhia"

Two more letters from the Sikh Chiefs on the subject of these negotiations, one from Sardars Gurdit Singh and Mohar Singh and another from Sardars Bhanga Singh, Gurdit Singh, (Gur) Bakhsh Singh and Jodh Singh were received by Sir John Cumming and forwarded to the Governor-General and the members of the Supreme Council on May 14, 1785. But as there was no fresh cause for a change in the Company's policy, nothing further than usual assurance from Colonel Sir John Cumming was advanced to the Sikhs.

Thus the treaties of Mahadji with the Sikhs and the proposed alliance of the Sikhs with the East India Company in 1785 fell through and did not come to fruition.

## The Origin of the Hindu-Sikh Tension in the Panjab\*

GANDA SINGH

For some time past there has been a good deal of misunderstanding about the origin of the Hindu-Sikh tension in the Panjab. It has become a fashion with some of our people to ascribe to the British or to the political policy of the British Government in India even things with which they had not the remotest connection. One such thing is the beginning of the Hindu-Sikh tension in the Panjab. The Hindu-Sikh tension, as we know, was a thing unknown during the Sikh rule upto the middle of the last century. And there were very happy relations between the two communities during the great uprising of 1857 and the following two decades. There could have been no better opportunity for the Britishers than the Mutiny days to exploit the Sikh sentiment against the Hindu Dogras and Poorbias who were mainly responsible, both directly and indirectly, by secret alliances and open betrayals, for the down-fall of the Sikh kingdom. Another opportunity offered itself to the British in the closing year of the eighteen sixties when a schismatic sect of the Sikhs, the Kookas, in their overflowing zeal and fanatical frenzy, pulled down a number of Hindu tombs and went about shouting: *Marhī masānī dhāi-ke kar dio madānā*, meaning 'pull down the mausoleums and crematories and level them with the earth.' But nobody took these activities of the Kookas very seriously and they provided no pretext for anyone to create hostilities between the Hindus and the Sikhs. It is, therefore, not correct to say that "the unfilial sentiments of the Sikhs towards Hinduism were the creation of British who, true to their policy of 'divide and rule' tried to create separatism." (Suraj Bhan, the *Tribune*, Ambala, September 25, 1957.)

Historically speaking, the tension had its origin in the unhappy language used for Guru Nanak and his followers by Shri Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, in his book the *Satyarth Prakash* published in 1875, the year in which, on April 10, the first Arya Samaj was established in Bombay.

(I shall not quote extensively from the first edition of the *Satyarth Prakash* or from its later revised and enlarged editions to avoid unpleasantness.)

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\*The *Missionary*, Vol. 2, March 1961, pp. 34-38.

The word used for the Sikh Guru therein is *dhūrta*, which, according to Bate's *Dictionary of the Hindi Language*, means "rogue, cheat, fraudulent, crafty, cunning, knavish, sly, dishonest, mischievous." The hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture, he called *mithyā* (falsehood), and Sikhism, a *jāl* (a snare) to rob and cheat simple folk of their wealth and property (*dhan ādik ha:ne ke wāste*).

Two years later, Swami Dayananda came to the Panjab and established the Arya Samaj at Lahore. In his discourses in the Panjab, he always praised the work of the Sikh Gurus. This attracted a number of Sikhs to the Arya Samaj. One of them, Bhai Jawahir Singh, later became the Secretary of the Lahore Arya Samaj and also of the D.A.V. College Managing Committee.

While Swami Dayananda was staying at Kanpur, on his return from the Panjab, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sub-Engineer of the Ajmer Division, wrote to him in protest against his objectionable remarks in the *Satyarth Prakash* against the Sikhs and Sikhism. Swamiji wrote back saying that his opinion had undergone a change during his visit to the Panjab and that the remarks in question would be deleted from the next edition of the book. But nothing came to be done. It was, perhaps, due to the untimely death of Swamiji on October, 10, 1883. The second edition of the *Satyarth Prakash* was, perhaps, then still in the press.

With the passage of time, the publication of the second edition of the *Satyarth Prakash* and the admission of some over-zealous youngmen into the Arya Samaj, the attitude of some of the leading Arya Samajists became increasingly hostile towards Sikhs and Sikhism. The columns of the *Arya Samachar*, Meerut, and the *Arya Patrika*, Lahore, of those days bear witness to this.

The second edition of the *Satyarth Prakash* turned out to be more disappointing and hostile. In it the attack on the Sikh Gurus, the Sikh scripture and the Sikh people in general was more direct, more biting and more painful. Guru Nanak was given out as illiterate, self-conceited and hypocrite. The Sikh scripture was insulted and the tenets and symbols of Sikhism were ridiculed. And the Sikhs in general were dubbed as arrogant and slaves to lust.

This naturally disillusioned such of the Sikhs as were members of the Arya Samaj or were its active supporters. They felt very much hurt and dejected. What added to the tension was the fanatical attitude of some members of the Arya Samaj who went out of their way to flash the wrongful remarks of the *Satyarth Prakash* and unnecessarily wounded the susceptibilities of the Sikhs.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE HINDU-SIKH TENSION IN THE PANJAB

There were, however, some well-meaning members of the Arya Samaj who sincerely felt that a wrong had come to be done to the Sikhs by the objectionable remarks of Swami Dayananda. They wrote apologetic and appeasing letters and notes in the *Vidya Prakashak* and other journals and newspapers. To quote only one, Lala Amolak Ram Munsif of Gujjar Khan writing to the Editor, *Akhbār-i-Aam*, Lahore, on September 30, 1887, said :

*Mere piāre aur mukarram Editor Akhbār-i-Aam,*

*Kisī gumnām sāhib ne āp-ke akhbār ke zarīye hamāre muazziz aur fakhr-i-qaum Sikh bhāīyon ko Aryā dharm ke barkhilāf mushtād karne ke waste Swāmi Dayānand Surastī ke Satyārth Prākāsh se ek intikhāb shāyā kīyā hai. Main sacche dil se umīd kartā hūn kih yih us ki koshish-i-hāsidadānā bilkul rāīgān jaegī.*

*Aryā Samāj Dayānand Saraswatī ko sirf insān samajhata hai. Har ek insān se ghalti honi mumkin hai. Swāmi Dayānand Saraswatiji aghlabān zabān Panjābī aur hālāt-i-Panjāb se Satyārth Prākāsh likhte waqt pūre wākīf nā the. Main yaqīn kartā hūn kih bashart mauqā milne ke woh is rāi ko zarūr tarmīm karte, magar afsos hai kih unko mauqā nā milā. Lekin sirf unkā yih rāi zāhir karnā Aryā Samāj ko pāband nahin kartā. Mujhe umīd hai kih taqrībān har ek Aryā is rāi ki ghalti kā qāyal hai. Main khud Aryā hone ka fakhar kartā hūn aur main is rāi ko ghalat samajhatā hūn. Mujhe pūrā yaqīn hai kih mere Singh bhāi sirf Swāmi Dayānand Saraswati kī ek ghalti ke bāis us ke bāqī nihāyat umdā kām ke hargiz mukhālīf nahin ho jāenge.*

Translated into English it would read as :

My dear and respected Editor the *Akhbār-i-Aam*,

Some anonymous person has published in your paper an extract from Swami Dayananda Saraswati's *Satyarth Prakash* with the object of instigating our respected and glorious Sikh brethren against the Arya dharma. I sincerely hope this jealous effort of his will not succeed.

The Arya Samaj considers Swami Dayananda Saraswati a human being. Every human being is liable to err. At the time of writing the *Satyarth Prakash*, Swamiji was probably not fully conversant with the Panjab and Panjabi language ... Alas ! he did not get a chance, otherwise, I am sure, he would have amended this opinion. But his expression of this opinion does not bind the Arya Samaj. I hope almost every Arya is convinced of his error. I am proud of being an Arya myself, and I hold this opinion [of Swami Dayananda] to be wrong. I am sure that for this one mistake of Swami Dayananda

Saraswati, my Sikh brethren will not at all turn against the rest of his very good work.

Copies of this letter were sent to some other newspapers as well.

The Sikhs were to some extent soothed by the expression of regret and goodwill by those who had reasons to be grateful to the Sikhs for the help and co-operation which they had extended to Swami Dayananda and his movement in the early days. But this did not continue for long. Instead of improving the situation, it was worsened by the fire-breathing speeches of some of the leaders of the Arya Samaj at its eleventh annual session held at Lahore on Saturday and Sunday the 24th and 25th of November, 1888.

Pandit Guru Datt, the leader of the anti-modernist section of the Arya Samaj, in his speech on the morning of Sunday the 25th of November, not only repeated the anti-Sikh remarks of the *Satyarth Prakash*, but also entered into odious comparisons and launched an attack on Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. The discussions of Lala Murlidhar and Swami Swatmananda on the subject added fuel to the smouldering fire which soon burst out into flames.

Pandit Guru Datt's speech was followed the same evening by that of Pandit Lekh Ram who spoke with still greater force and hostility against the Sikhs. Not only this. At one stage in the course of his speech, Pandit Lekh Ram physically insulted the holy book of the Sikhs, *Guru Granth Sahib*, which had been unceremoniously placed there on the table before him. This was more than what the Sikhs present in the meeting could tolerate.

Thus publicly insulted and ridiculed, the Sikhs were left with the only alternative of finally breaking with the Arya Samaj.

There was then a large number of Hindus as well who felt disgusted with this attitude of the leaders of the Arya Samaj. A joint protest meeting was held on the next Sunday, the 2nd of December, 1888, in the Baoli Sahib, Lahore, under the presidentship of Lala Nand Gopal. Lala Ladli Prasad was the principal speaker. The other speakers were Bhai Jawahir Singh, Bhai Dit Singh and Dr Narayan Singh. According to the report of the meeting published in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, of December 8, 1888, there was a great resentment in the city of Lahore at the ugly and unpleasant situation created by the leaders of the Arya Samaj in their eleventh annual session held in the last week of November.

This is, in brief, the factual account of how the Hindu (Arya Samaj)-Sikh tension began in the seventies and eighties of the last century, soon after the birth of the Arya Samaj.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE HINDU-SIKH TENSION IN THE PANJAB

In truth, it is a misnomer to call it Hindu-Sikh tension. It is, in fact, only Arya Samaj-Sikh tension. The new name has come to be given to it very recently. A reference to the columns of the *Arya Gazette* and the *Satdharma Pracharak* will show that the Arya Samajists for a long time carried on a campaign against the word *Hindu* and refused to associate themselves with it. But this is a separate topic of study.

For a more detailed study, the inquisitive reader is referred to : the *Satyarth Prakash*, Hindi, first edition of 1875 and subsequent revised and enlarged editions and their translations into Urdu, English and Panjabi ; the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, November and December, 1888; the *Akhbar-i-Aam*, Lahore, the *Aftab-i-Panjab*, Lahore, the *Koh-i-Noor*, Lahore, for September to December, 1888. These and other newspapers and journals published at Lahore during the last two decades of the nineteenth century contain very valuable material on this subject.

*Ham Hindu Nahin*  
The Arya-Sikh Relations, 1877-1905

KENNETH W. JONES\*

South Asian scholars have long viewed communal competition in terms of majority-minority struggle, of Hindu *versus* Muslim, leading to the final partition of the British *Rāj* into two antagonistic states. Punjab history offers a dramatic case of religious competitiveness between two minority communities, concerned more with their own sense of identity than with questions of power and dominance. Attempts among Punjabi Hindus to create a new, modernized and respectable religious tradition could not be contained within their community but inevitably altered existing relations, with all other religions in Punjab, Muslim, Sikh and Christian. As newly anglicized elites came into existence, they provided a growing class of alienated and marginal men. Unable to relate to the orthodox world around them, they sought to redefine that world, and in so doing created new ideological systems encompassing a reinterpretation of the past and present, plus a new vision of the future. Elaboration, defence, and dissemination of these ideologies produce both group consciousness and a heightened awareness of separation, of distance between those who accepted the new beliefs and all others. This process of identity reformations created in late nineteenth century Punjab a period of intense dynamism, of ideological and religious conflict amidst an increasingly polemical atmosphere, as each group within a given religious community, Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim sought to project its own concepts and in the process struggled with others within their own community and beyond. This process of questioning, and its resultant answers permanently altered relations among Punjabi religious communities and, at a more fundamental level, the conceptualizations undergirding many of the groups within them.

Traditionally the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have been closely interlinked on all levels. Heavily influenced by Islam, Sikhism's heritage of bloody struggle against Moghul persecution forcibly maintained Sikh

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ties with the Hindu community. Geographically Hindus and Sikhs occupied the central and eastern sections of Punjab, accounting in 1891 for approximately half of the provincial population, 40 and 7.4 per cent., respectively. Ties of kinship often linked the two communities within the same *Jāti* (caste) and even the same family. Prakash Tandon, a Hindu *Khatris*, recalling his own familial history, wrote: "We and the Sikhs had the same castes and customs, and they were always members of our brotherhood—*biradaris*. In the villages we lived together and celebrated the same festivals . . . After all, we and the Sikhs stemmed from the same stock; most Hindus had Sikhs relations, and inter-marriage was common. In our own family my elder brother married a girl, who was a Sikh on her father's side, but a Hindu on her mother's."<sup>1</sup> Hindu priests conducted rituals in Sikh shrines; both Hindus and Sikhs celebrated many of the same festivals, revered the same prophets, and shared historical heroes. Essentially separate religions, the Hindu and Sikh communities overlapped without clear lines of demarcation.<sup>2</sup>

British conquest and annexation of the Punjab, completed in 1849, initiated a series of complex changes. The British sahib replaced the existing ruling class and ended the Sikh government founded by Ranjit Singh in 1799. Along with the Englishmen came Bengalis and Kayasthas, educated in English, who staffed the lower levels of the new administration.<sup>3</sup> Bengalis, as leaders of an interim elite, introduced ideologies and values from their home province. However, by the late 1870 and early 1880's, signs of tension appeared between the first wave of Punjabis educated in the new English language schools and Bengali leaders. Overwhelmingly Hindu, the English-speaking Punjabis were first attracted to the Brahmo-

1. Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Century* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), pp. 10-11. Tandon buttresses the conventional historical view of Hindu-Sikh relations prior to 1849. This interpretation stresses the lack of religious competitiveness and harmony between the two communities in contrast to later separatism. The degree to which this is an accurate picture of the past will remain unknown without extensive research in 18th and early 19th century Punjab, and without such research we have no grounds for challenging this conventional view.
2. The first British Census of Punjab, in 1855, did not differentiate between Sikhs and Hindus; the former being seen as a sub-division of the latter. In the 1871 Census and thereafter Sikhs were treated as a separate religious community.
3. The establishment of an interim elite, one existing between the British conqueror and the Punjabi population, is discussed in Kenneth W. Jones, "The Bengali Elite in Post-Annexation Punjab: An Example of Inter-Regional Influence in 19th Century Punjab," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, III, No. 4 (December, 1966), pp. 20-36.

Samaj as they accepted Bengali modernity. With the creation of an indigenous educated class, Punjabis turned to the more aggressive and less syncretistic Arya Samaj, a modernizing Hindu sect.

In 1877 Swami Dayanand Saraswati arrived in Lahore at the invitation of educated Punjabis, resident Bengalis, and one Sikh aristocrat, Sardar Vikram Singh Ahluwalia. During his nearly fifteen months in the Punjab, Dayanand founded a series of Arya Samajes throughout the province. His vision of a Hinduism based on the infallibility of the Vedas, shorn of idolatry, polytheism, Brahmanical domination and the intricacies of the *Jāti* system, possessing rationality and modern science, found ready acceptance among educated Hindus. During the next few years many young Hindus deserted the Brahmo Samaj for this new Aryan ideology, finding in it values and attitudes more relevant to the realities of religious competition in the northwest.

Swami Dayanand's major targets for criticism remained orthodox Hinduism, Islam and the Christian missions. Hindu orthodoxy, most condemned, responded with vilification of this *sādhu* reformer and produced its own counter-attacks against Dayanand's claim to religious truth. Religious reformers, both Bengali and Punjabi, at first saw in him an ally in their struggle with tradition. Bengali leaders of the Brahmo Samaj soon moved into opposition, as each reforming society sought to claim the banner of modernising leadership for its own. In the ensuing controversies Dayanand had relatively little to say against the Sikhs. Only in Amritsar, the holy city of Sikhism, did he choose to belittle their faith, its founders, and current practices. Sikh leaders were outraged, and the Nihangs, militant defenders of the Sikh religion, threatened to assassinate Dayanand for his condemnation of their faith. For Dayanand, Sikhism was one of the innumerable cults of Hinduism, to be noted, refuted and then forgotten. "Nānakjī [the founder of Sikhism] had noble aims, but he had no learning. He knew the language of the villages of his country. He had no knowledge of Vedic scriptures or *Sanskrit*."<sup>4</sup> Without Sanskrit, Guru Nanak could have no knowledge of the Vedas, and without such knowledge could accomplish nothing of permanence. His followers lost what little of value existed within Nanak's teachings, becoming mere idolaters, one in degeneracy with Puranic Hindus. "They do not worship idols, but they worship the *Grantha Saheb* which is as good as idolatry. Just as idol-worshippers have set up their shop in order to get their live-

4. Swami Dayanand, *Satyarth Prakash* (*The Light of Truth*, trans. by Ganga Prasad (Allahabad: The Kala Press, 1956), p. 522.

lihood, so have these people. Just as the priests of temples ask their devotees to see the goddess and offer presents to her, similarly Sikhs worship the book and present gifts to it."<sup>5</sup> Aryas of the Punjab could not dismiss the Sikhs as did Dayanand in three and a half pages of the *Sat-yarth Prakāsh*, nor did they choose, at least not initially, to condemn them as degenerate idolaters.

At first Aryas identified with Sikhism as a movement which, like the Samaj, had sought to create a purified Hinduism devoid of idolatry, caste, and the evils of priestly dominance. Aryas would capture the Sikh past and make it their own. Young educated Sikhs reacted to the Samaj with sympathy, interest, and for a few, enthusiastic commitment. Bhai Jawahir Singh worked closely with Swami Dayanand during his tour of the Punjab, serving as Secretary of the Lahore Arya Samaj from its inception, and as Secretary of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College fund collection committee.<sup>6</sup> Jawahir Singh's leadership in the Samaj brought other Sikhs into the movement, including Bhai Ditt Singh *Gyani* and *Bhai* Mayya Singh. Others, such as Bhagat Lakshman Singh, joined the Samaj out of conviction, finding in it much the same ideological answers as young Punjabi Hindus.<sup>7</sup> Through the early 1880's young educated Sikhs worked in the Samaj with little noticeable strain. Aryas and reformist Sikhs stressed the similarities of 'true' Sikhism and Arya Hinduism. Bhai Basant Singh, in a lecture delivered before a Sikh audience in Gujranwala on September 4, 1887, stated that "... the mission of Guru Nanak was simply to revive the Vedic religion of the ancient Rishis of *Arya Varta* [the land of the Aryas], that this religion consisted of the worship of one's incarnate, invisible and omnipresent God, that it had become degenerated and spoilt by ages of ignorance and oppression and that the evils which befell India were the natural consequences of Indians' forsaking the

5. *Ibid.*, p. 525. Khushwant Singh, in his *History of the Sikhs*, commented on Dayanand's view of the Sikhs and their scriptures. "It did not take the orthodox Sikhs long to appreciate that Dayanand's belief in the infallibility of the Vedas was as un-compromising as that of the Muslims in the Koran. The *Granth* was to him a book of secondary importance, and the Sikh gurus men of little learning; Nanak, he denounced as a *dambhi* (hypocrite). Dayanand was contemptuous of Sikh theologians because of their ignorance of Sanskrit: his favourite phrase for any one who did not measure up to him was *maha mūrakh* (great fool). Dayanand set the tone; his zealous admirers followed suit." *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.139.
6. Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, Ganda Singh, editor, (Calcutta: Sikh Culture Centre, 1965), p. 135.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-28.

true faith of their ancestors." He reiterated that Sikhism "was simply a revival of the old Aryan faith and that the unequal contest in which the Gurus were engaged was on behalf of the whole Arya Varta and the Hindu nation.<sup>8</sup> A sense of shared goals and common heritage seemed to underlie this union between Aryas and their Sikh supporters. Contemporary Hinduism would be purged of its errors and in this purging, drawn closer to the pure Sikhism of yesterday. Yet this process of cleansing, of removing error, led not to union but to division and increasing hostility.

Parallel to Arya identification with Sikh goals and past achievements ran a current of Arya criticism of contemporary Sikhism for many of the same errors found in existent Hinduism. It emerged as early as 1885. For Sikhism as with Hinduism, the past was glorious, the present dark. "The Khalsa (Sikh) community has undergone many changes since its formation. That sublime and pure faith founded on the Vedas, which was taught by Guru Nanak and his worthy successors, has since greatly degenerated. Idolatry has again been introduced, and priest craft in another form has become rampant."<sup>9</sup> The Sikh community had fallen from the high moral standard of Guru Nanak in both practice and belief even to the point of deifying the great Guru himself. "Guru Nanak holds a high place among a host of reformers who have flourished during the last few centuries in various parts of India and who, unaided by any education, have tried to purge the adulterated and corrupt religion and other institutions of their times of their alloy by mere force of strong moral character and by dint of natural genius."<sup>10</sup> After considerable praise of Nanak's character, his poetic ability and uplifting message, the writer carefully pointed out present misrepresentations of the Guru. "It would be wrong to say that whatever he wrote or said is true to the very letter. To assert such a proposition would be to commit ourselves to a very ridiculous position. The superstitious Sikhs do believe him to be an incarnation of the Deity and would be uncommonly wrath if anybody dared to hint that *Granth Sahib* is not *absolutely* true. ..." Aryas specifically rejected any claim to infallibility for Guru Nanak, since it would have placed Sikhism and its founder above their own movement and their own prophet, Swami Dayanand.<sup>11</sup> That his works or his writings can not be absolutely

8. *Arya Patrika*, September 13, 1887, pp. 7-8.

9. *Arya Patrika*, December 12, 1885, p. 6.

10. *Arya Patrika*, May 25, 1886, p. 1.

11. The Sikh claim to infallibility of Guru Nanak was unacceptable to all Aryas. Those who stressed rationality and held a reformist image of the Samaj rejected  
[Contd. on page 335]



true is evident from the fact that he was not an educated man in the first place—he did not study the Vedas or the Shastras or any of the schools of philosophy with which the Aryan literature can be enriched. Even if he had studied Sanskrit, even then he could have not helped making a mistake, for human nature is frail and is liable to error. All we can say about him is that he made less mistakes than could be expected from a man who had received no education worthy of the name and who had entirely to depend on the resources of his own uncultivated mind.”<sup>12</sup> Aryas, through faint praise, attempted to place Guru Nanak in his historical role as “an intelligent and good man,” who, because of his lack of education, was clearly less in every way than Swami Dayanand. Few Sikhs agreed and many found this interpretation infuriating, verging on heresy.

Arya criticisms of contemporary Sikhism grew steadily more shrill. In a lengthy article entitled “Sikhism Past and Present,” the Arya critique of Sikhism appears fully articulated in uncompromising, if not inflammatory, terms. After a brief complimentary note on the “Sikh of the Past” as an “uncompromising theist” the *Arya Patrika* turned to an examination of existing Sikhism. “That spiritual eminence which Sikhism had well nigh attained in those degenerate days of priestcraft and idolatry has been lost and at the present day its spiritual condition is as bad as that of the most bigoted Hindus. Indeed, it glories in being ranked with the Hindus on that point. It upholds and duly observes some of the most absurd customs which trace their origin to the base selfishness of our spiritual guides...”<sup>13</sup> Priest ridden and superstitious Sikhism could not boast of the same progressive trend that Hindus saw within their own religion. “While the prejudices of the Hindu community are gradually fading away before the progress of western civilization, those of the Sikh community are acquiring fresh strength by their reluctance to keep pace with the march of times... The intellectual forces brought into play by the spread of English education are slowly and imperceptibly infusing a spirit of liberalism into the Hindu mind, but it is our individual opinion, and we think we have good ground to come to such a conclusion, that the Sikh is as much a bigoted and narrowminded being now as he was thirty years back...” The loss of political dominance condemned Sikhs to

*Contd. from page 334]*

all human claims to infallibility, while the few militant Aryas, who were beginning to see Dayanand as a *rishi*, an infallible prophet, would grant that status to no other religious leader.

12. *Arya Patrika*, May 25, 1886, p. 3.

13. Quotes given below from *Arya Patrika*, September 13, 1887, pp. 1-4.

a backward state. Aryas could and did see Sikhism as even more degenerate, more decadent than contemporary Hinduism. Sikhs no longer followed the monotheistic doctrines of their great leaders and were, instead, worshipping anything and everything, more idolatrous than the orthodox Hindus. "By and by, they (the Sikhs) became to be what they at present are — a body of people under the special care of the goddess of ignorance and superstition." Similar attacks on Sikhism appeared in the Arya press throughout 1887 and 1888.<sup>14</sup>

The culmination of Aryan criticism of Sikhism took place at the Lahore anniversary celebration on November 25, 1888. Pandit Guru Datta in a speech to the assembly sharply criticised Sikhism.

...the lecturer (Lala Guru Datta) trampled under foot the honour of the *Khalsa* community, and in the course of his speech he said that the fact is that Keshab Chander and Guru Govind Singh were not even a hundredth part like our *Maharishi* Swami Dayanand Saraswati and it is difficult to say whether the Sikhs have any religion or not, but surely they have no knowledge of any kind. ... But, the Lala Sahib did not end there; he declared with great daring and courage that "if Swami Dayanand Saraswati Maharaj called Guru Nanak a great fraud, what did it matter? He held the sun of the Vedas in his hands, so if he wanted to compare this light with anything, what was that?"<sup>15</sup>

Other Arya leaders, specifically Pandit Lekh Ram and Lala Murli Dhar, rose to second Guru Datta's comments, adding their own words of condemnation.<sup>16</sup> The reaction was immediate. Bhai Jawahir Singh, Bhai Ditt Singh Gyani, and Bhai Mayya Singh resigned their Samaj membership and joined the Lahore Singh Sabha, a reformist Sikh society founded

14. See *Arya Patrika*, October 11, 1887, pp. 1-3. This article particularly condemned the descendants of the Gurus who by the nineteenth century formed a religious priestly aristocracy. "The several descendants of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Dass and Ram Dass, etc., have all of them managed to lay by, during the short period of two to three hundred years, a stock of empty boasts and irrational claims which might well startle even the Pope of Rome."
15. Bhai Amar Singh, *Ārya Samāj aur Us Ke Bāni ki Taraf se Duniyā ke Mukhtalif Hādian Mazhab ki be-i-Izzati* (Insults against the founders of different religions of the world by the Arya Samaj and its founder) (Lahore: Dev Bidhan Press, 1890), pp. 23-24. Guru Datta was an Arora by caste, hence the use of 'Lala,' but because of his scholarship and religious leadership soon became universally known as 'Pandit' Guru Datta.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

in 1879.<sup>17</sup> This defection meant more than loss of three member of the Samaj, as each became a staunch defender of the new Sikhism. Both Jawahir Singh and Ditt Singh Gyani also became leading figures in the Sikh resurgence.<sup>18</sup>

Within a few days of the anniversary celebration the Sikhs held a large protest meeting and condemned the Aryas and specifically Pandit Guru Datta.<sup>19</sup> The Sikh-Arya controversy quickly moved from the platform to the press. Sikh and non-Sikh papers denounced the Samaj for its aggressive stance, its habit of condemning other religious leaders and doctrines. Throughout 1889 the debate remained active and virulent.<sup>20</sup> Bhai Jawahir Singh quickly detailed his disillusionment with the Arya Samaj in a tract, '*Amāl-i-Arya*' (Acts of the Aryas) and followed this with a highly critical biography of Swami Dayanand.<sup>21</sup> Aryas would not be out-

17. Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, p. 58. A few Sikhs, such as Bhai Jagat Singh and Bawa Chhajju Singh, remained within the Arya Samaj. They accepted both Arya ideology and Samaj criticisms of orthodox Sikhism.
18. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, leader of the Lahore Singh Sabha, welcomed these new members who became enthusiastic supporters of the Sabha adding greatly to its strength. Both Bhai Jawahir Singh and Bhai Ditt Singh Gyani wrote extensively. Jawahir Singh worked for the Singh Sabha and for the Sikh educational movement. One of the first supporters of the Khalsa College concept, he later served as Secretary to the college. He also became Chief Secretary and Vice-President of the Khalsa Diwan. He wrote extensively in Urdu and Punjabi, on a variety of religious and social questions relating to Sikhism. He died on May 14, 1910. Ditt Singh Gyani, member of the depressed classes, became a close associate of Professor Gurmukh Singh after leaving the Arya Samaj. He edited the *Khālā Akhbār*, served on the Khalsa College Council, the *Khalsa Diwan*, and the Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Lahore. He died on June 17, 1901. See Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, pp. 135-6, 143.
19. An account of this meeting and of more Sikh charges, against the Arya Samaj appeared in the tract, *Amāl-i-Arya* (The Actions of the Aryas) by Bhai Jawahir Singh (Lahore: Islamia Press, 1889); additional mention of this meeting can be found in Amar Singh; *Arya Samāj aur Us ke Bānī...*, pp. 23-8.
20. *Āftāb-i-Punjab*, December 14, 1888, *Selections from the Punjab Vernacular Press* (Hereinafter *SPVP*), 1888, p. 340. *Āftāb-i-Punjab*, January 28, 1889; *SPVP*, pp. 40-1; *Akhbār-i-Ām*, February 23, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 93; *Rāvi*, August 7, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 324; *Koh-i-Nūr*, September 17, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 392; *Nānak Parkāsh*, August 25, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 366; *Singh Sabhai*, January 17, 1891; *SPVP*, p. 230.
21. *Rāvi*, August 7, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 324. The *Rāvi* warned that the Arya-Sikh "controversy is likely to lead to unpleasant consequences, (the) Government should take steps to prevent the Sikhs and the Aryas from preaching in the public streets."

done nor silenced. They too replied in print, and in the same contentious spirit. Radha Kishen Mehta published *Nuskha-i-Granthi-Phobiā* (Prescription for the disease of Granthi-Phobia), a low point for even Punjab polemics.<sup>22</sup> The publication of *Granthi-Phobia* produced threats of a law-suit, of violence, and additional aggressive literature.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the 1890's, reformist Sikhs and Aryas continued to oppose each other in print and on the platform, while occasionally co-operating on issues of mutual interest. Both enthusiastically sought to reject opposing claims to reform leadership. In the process of argument and debate, modernizing Sikhs increasingly concerned themselves with defining their own identity within Sikhism and for Sikhism's identity within the broader world of Punjab. Clearly, they would not be Aryas, but if they could not identify with the newly purified Hinduism, then where did they belong? This quest lay implicit in the search of young Sikhs for self and for community. It would become explicit by the close of the century.

Within a growing atmosphere of Arya-Sikh competitiveness limited cooperation continued in the realm of *Shuddhi* (purification).<sup>24</sup> Sikhism, like Islam and Christianity, converted heathens to its faith. Hinduism did

22. Norman G. Barrier, *The Sikhs and Their Literature : A Guide to Books, Tracts and Periodicals* (1849-1919) (Delhi : Manohar Book Service, 1970), p. xxxv. Professor Barrier noted that. "After charges against Jawahir Singh comes a defense of Dayanand combined with criticism of Guru Nanak. According to the Arya writer, Nanak pretended to be an *Āvtār* of God and ordered Guru *Angad* to commit incest his own mother."
23. *Khair-Khwāh-i-Kashmir*, August 6, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 324; *Nānak Parkāsh*, September 25, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 401; *Bhārat Sudhār*, October 19, 1889; *SPVP*, 1889, p. 434; *Nānak Parkash*, April 1890; *SPVP*, 1890 170; *Bhārat Sudhār*, May 31, 1890; *SPVP*, 1890, p. 208. The tract, *Arya Samaj aur Us ke Bāni...* was written as direct answer to *Granthi-Phobiā*.
24. The term *shuddhi* (purification) was variously interpreted. In its narrowest definition, it applied to the purification of individuals converted to another religion within their lifetime. More radical or daring Aryas applied it to those whose ancestors had been converted and a few thinkers claimed that anyone, Hindu or non-Hindu, could be converted to Aryanism, since Vedic Hinduism was the *ur*-religion of mankind. All conversion was, in fact, reconversion, returning an individual to the parent fold of Hinduism. *Shuddhi*, as purification, was also applied to the act of transforming *shudra* and outcast Hindus and Sikhs to pure caste status. Interpretations and practice of *shuddhi* varied both at a given time and through time. For an extensive study of *shuddhi* in the 20th century, see Gene Robert Thursbay, 'Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India, A study of Aryā Samaj Activities, Government of India Policies, and Communal Conflict in the Period 1923-28,' (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1972), particularly chapter I, pp. 31-78.

not. Dayanand, in reaction to the conversion of Hindus by other religions, utilised *Shuddhi*, the traditional rites of purification for those who had transgressed Hindu social norms, to reconvert individuals lost to Islam and Christianity. During his tour of the Punjab, Dayanand purified only one individual, a Christian convert from Sikhism.<sup>25</sup> Aryas followed his example slowly and with some reluctance. *Shuddhi* presented severe problem of social acceptance of the reconvert by his caste brotherhood, moreover, it provoked the general disapproval of the Hindu community. *Shuddhi*, however, represented a new dimension of Hinduism, a weapon initially aimed at winning back those lost to the community and eventually used to transform Hinduism into a proselytizing religion capable of aggressive competition for converts.

Anglicized Sikhs offered assistance for Arya attempts to stem the tide of Christian and Islamic conversion. As early as 1885, the local Singh Sabha publicly joined the Rawalpindi Arya Samaj in its purification of a Muslim convert.<sup>26</sup> Sikh reformers with Arya allies founded the Shuddhi Sabha (purification society),<sup>27</sup> and by the early 1890's three groups, the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabhas, and the Shuddhi Sabhas, sometimes in alliance, otherwise independently, performed purification with increasing frequency. The Sikh community possessed what Hindus did not, a tradition of conversion complete with initiation ceremonies. For Sikhs, both conversion and reconversion had an air of the traditional, although problems of caste acceptance existed within their community as they did among the Hindus. During the years 1893-4 the reform Sikhs of Gujranwala joined with the local Arya Samaj to sponsor *Shuddhis*. Together they succeeded in purifying "lost Sikhs and Hindus in Gujranwala and the surrounding area."<sup>28</sup> This account illustrates their methods of reconversion.

A young Sikh who had embraced Islam was taken back into the fold of Hinduism on the 15th instant at Gujranwala. He had fallen in

25. Har Bilas Sarda, *Life of Dayanand Saraswati* (Ajmer Vedic Yantralaya, 1946), pp. 196-97.

26. *Arya Patrika*, August 22, 1885, p. 4.

27. The History of the Shuddhi Sabhas still remains vague and unclear. Precisely when they were founded, the exact nature of their membership and support, and the distribution of this movement still need to be established by further research. We see them through reports of specific acts of *shuddhi* and in stray comments by Aryas and Sikhs. They are a puzzle with pieces.

28. The first instance of cooperation between the Gujranwala Arya Samaj and the Singh Sabha appeared in the Tribune, February 18, 1893, p.4. See also Lahore, *Tribune*, April 8, 1893, p.4; January 24, 1894, p. 4; February 7, 1894, p.4; March 14, 1894, p. 3; and August 18, 1894, p. 4.

love with a Mussalman woman with whom he lived for sometime. For this he was turned out by his people. His eyes were then opened to enormity of his offence against caste rules and he begged for mercy, but in vain. At last he sought the help of the Singh Sabha, who promised to 'purify' him if he would, for a period of two years keep himself aloof from the society of the woman and live like a Hindu. This ordeal he successfully passed through. So on Wednesday afternoon a public meeting was held at the Singh Sabha School under the auspices of Sabha and local Arya Samaj. The gathering was a very large one. Short speeches were made...and the man was then declared to be as good a Hindu as any. Two large dishes of *Karāh Parshād* (consecrated sweets) had been prepared which were distributed to the present by him, and all ate it as a sign of the removal of the ban of excommunication.<sup>29</sup>

Sikh-Arya cooperation in the sponsoring of *Shuddhi* was a major strand of the tangled and contradictory relations between reformed Sikhs and Aryas, a relationship contained within the broader ambiguity of Sikh and Hindu. Apart from *Shuddhi*, no single institution would have a greater impact on the relationship between Sikh-Hindu identities. Still in an early stage of development, from 1884 through 1894, *Shuddhi* added a new weapon of defence to Hinduism, one which could also be converted into an offensive weapon, *Parchār* (preaching) and *Shuddhi* (purification), the word and the act, awaited their full impact on society, an impact to be born of militancy and fear.

Arya support for *Shuddhi* and their relations with the Sikh community were altered by developments within the Arya Samaj. Following the death of Dayanand in 1883, fundamentally opposed interpretations of Arya ideology found expression among members of the movement. Pandit Guru Datta and his close allies, Lala Munshi Ram (later Swami Shradhdhanand) and Pandit Lekh Ram, articulated a militantly religious vision of the samaj. They increasingly saw Dayanand as a *rishi*, a sage whose word lay beyond question or interpretation, rather than a mere reformer. To be an 'Arya' meant to devote all of one's being to the true Hindu faith in the drive for a revived, purified Hinduism as Dayanand envisioned it. These radical Samajists articulated and elaborated the ideal Arya, attaching to that concept a variety of beliefs and characteristics.

Lalas Hans Raj, Lal Chand, and Lajpat Rai led a more moderate and rationalistic wing of the Arya Samaj concerned mainly with the

29. *Tribune*, February 18, 1893, p. 4.

expansion of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic schools and college. In 1893-4 a multiplicity of overlapping and interconnected issues, both ideological and personal, formalized the division of the Arya Samaj into two groups: a radical, militant, devotional party—the 'Mahatma' Aryas—with their headquarters in the Wachhowali Samaj of Lahore; and a moderate—'College Party'—with a new organization, the Anarkali Samaj on the outskirts of the city. This division spread throughout the province and the entire Samajic world, as each group sought to win supporters in the outlying organizations, vegetarianism versus meat-eating became the issue symbolizing all other differences between the contending parties. Leaders of the radical 'Mahatma' Aryas insisted on adherence to strict vegetarianism for all Aryas, while 'College' leaders saw diet as a matter of personal choice.

In the years immediately following the split, radical Aryas emphasized proselytization, *Shuddhi*, and social reform. Led by Lala Munshi Ram and Pandit Lekh Ram, they lashed out against opposing religions and against all forms of degenerate orthodoxy. The ensuing struggle between proponents of Islam and Aryas culminated in the assassination of the radical leader Pandit Lekh Ram in 1897. Aryas, stunned by the murder, reunited briefly, then once more divided in bitter controversy. Following this re-division, radical Samajists again turned to an aggressive *Shuddhi* campaign to end the threat of conversion. In the last years of the century, the potential loss through conversion came not so much from the defection of educated youths—for the success of Arya schools had greatly reduced that danger—but from the possible loss of the lowest levels of Hindu society, the outcastes. The 1891 Census dramatically underscored Christian success in reaching Punjabi outcastes. With its 410 per cent. increase in 'native' Christians, even the most sanguine Arya felt a renewal of the "Christian threat."<sup>30</sup>

The division of the Samaj produced divisions among supporters of *shuddhi*. The Shuddhi Sabhas under the leadership of radical Sikhs instituted a "pork test" for converts from Islam. If the eating of beef could transform a Hindu into a Muslim, then by similar logic the eating of pork would signify the return of a Muslim to Hinduism or Sikhism.<sup>31</sup>

30. For an example of Arya reaction to this conversion, see *Sat Dharm Pracharak*, August 20, 1897; *SPVP*, 1897, p. 766; and Lala Jai Chandra's, *Isdion ke Hath se Bhāion ko Bachāo* (Save your brethren from the hands of the Christian Missionaries) (Lahore: Kishan Chand Press, 1898).

31. J. Reid Graham, "The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism with Special Reference to Caste." (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1942) p. 466. (Hereinafter *The Arya Samaj*.)

Radical Aryas with their rigid insistence on vegetarianism withdrew all support from the Sabhas and condemned them for their "degenerate Hinduism."<sup>32</sup> Similar criticisms came from the Muslim community, from orthodox Hindus and orthodox Sikhs,<sup>33</sup> leaving the 'College' (moderate) Aryas as the only effective ally of the Shuddhi Sabhas. During the years 1895 and 1896, purifications continued, sponsored by the two competing groups, the Shuddhi Sabhas with their Arya supporters, and radical Arya Samajists now acting independently of their previous allies. Both utilized previous experience and both concerned themselves largely with returning individuals lost to other proselytizing religions. The practice of *Shuddhi* became a permanent feature of Punjabi life, contributing to communal discord, particularly with the innovation of the "pork test."

On March 31, 1896, the Shuddhi Sabha reconverted five people and on April 5th another group of six.<sup>34</sup> *Shuddhi* began to move from its focus on the individual toward mass purifications. In August, the Lahore Shuddhi Sabha broke through past restraints.

The Lahore Shuddhi Sabha had a grand field day on Sunday (30th) last at Madhopur... They 'purified' according to Sikh rites a family of over two hundred outcaste Sikhs—men, women, and children—dwelling in a village by themselves. Their common great-grandfather had been excommunicated for taking unto himself a Mussulmani woman. The leading office-bearers of the Sabha, and about a hundred Sikh (initiated and non-initiated), Brahman, Khatri and Arora gentlemen from Lahore, Amritsar and other places, visited Madhopur, and sat down to the dinner given by the 'purified' to celebrate the event. The ceremonial was impressive and unusual.<sup>35</sup>

This step not only represented the largest number purified at one time but marked a new goal for the movement; the transformation of outcastes into clean caste Hindus and Sikhs. While this change of direction clearly stemmed from Christian missionary success among outcastes, its most immediate impact lay elsewhere: in the realm of Sikh-Arya relations.

Young educated Sikhs had found themselves caught up in a similar historical process as their Hindu compatriots. After becoming disillusioned with the Arya Samaj in the later 1880's, they sought a place for themselves within a distinctly Sikh world, yet in opposition to Sikh ortho-

32. *Sat Dharm Prachārak*, January 8, 1897, *SPVP*, p. 40.

33. *Singh Sahāi*, March 12, 1895; *SPVP*, 1895, p. 162.

34. *Tribune*, April 8, 1896, p. 4.

35. *Tribune*, September 2, 1896, p. 4.



doxy. During the 1890's the question of Sikh identity was posed with increasing frequency.<sup>36</sup> Are Sikhs simply another branch or sect of Hinduism, or are they a separate faith and a separate people? In part, British writers were blamed for raising this question as another example of their divide and rule tactics.

English writers, even Anglo-Indian editors, who might know better, always make a grave mistake when speaking of the Sikhs. They seem to think that Sikhs are a people totally different from the Hindus, with whom they have very little in common. While the fact is that practically what differentiates a Sikh from a Hindu is his long hair and unclipped beard. In many families one brother may be a Hindu and the other a Sikh. As to religious belief, there is very little difference between the average Hindu and the Sikh in the Punjab, the GURU and the GRANTH being held in equal reverence by both. The lion-riding goddess of the Hindus is the presiding deity at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's tomb, and the majority of the worshippers at the Golden Temple are Hindus. Among respectable Sikhs caste is observed and such as have the privilege wear the sacred thread. The Brahman priest plays as important a part among the Sikhs as Hindus. In short, Sikhs are not distinct from the Hindus and have adopted this name merely to show that they give a particular Guru a place above all others.<sup>37</sup>

Events at the close of the decade brought this question to the forefront of Sikh and Hindu minds, surrounding it with bitter controversy as tensions between Aryas and Sikhs impinged increasingly on broader relations between the two religious communities, Hindu and Sikh.

Aggressive Arya preachers had not only criticised the Sikh faith, including both Gurus and *Granth*, but had done so within the premises of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Such public attacks heightened the Sikhs' sense of self-awareness and separation from Hinduism.<sup>38</sup> The

36. N. G. Barrier, in his introduction to *The Sikhs and Their Literature*, gives an excellent sketch of the complex and diverse forces acting within the Sikh community to propel Sikhs toward a revaluation of their identity and their relations with the Hindu community. A full examination of this process lies beyond the scope of this article. See pages xviii-xxiii; xxxiv-xxxix.

37. *Tribune*, August 17, 1892, p. 4.

38. See *Singh Sahāi*, July 25, 1897, *SPVP*, 1897, p. 674; for arguments over whether Sikhs are Hindus, see the *Tribune*, February 27, 1897, p. 4; March 24, p. 4; and the great burst of controversy in 1900. In *Tribune*, March 10, 1900, p. 5; March 13, p. 6; March 17, p. 5; March 22, pp. 5-6; March 24, pp. 5-6; March 29, p. 5; April 3, pp. 5-6; April 19, p. 5; and June 21, p. 5. Similar questions were argued in the pages of the *Khālsā*, April 4, 1900, p. 5; and April 25, pp. 5-6.

redivision of the Samaj in 1897-8 brought the moderate Aryas ('College Party') to public support of the embattled Sikhs; much to the horror of the radicals, Lala Paira Ram, Extra-Assistant Commissioner at Lahore and a leading member of the radical faction, charged that the :

Editor of the *Arya Gazette* in his anxiety to please the Sikhs observes in the issue of the 15th July that Swami Dayanand had an imperfect knowledge of Gurmukhi, and that the remarks made by him regarding Guru Nanak in the *Śatyārth Prakāśh* are based on second-hand information and were not endorsed by the Arya Samaj. ... The impolitic and uncalled for remarks of the *Arya Gazette* regarding the Swami have given great offence to the Aryas. Even if it be admitted that such remarks were politic, the Editor must remember that he had no right to say that the Samaj did not agree with the Swami's views, or that they were based on incorrect information. There are very few men in the Samaj who are at one with the Editor, while thousands will come forward to prove that the Swami's remarks were justifiable.<sup>39</sup>

The question of Sikh identity had now become tangled in internal Samaj bickering, adding a further dimension to the already existing conflict. Radical Aryas, in order to uphold the sanctity of Dayanand, attacked Guru Nanak and the Sikh faith, while the moderates stayed with their allies in the Shuddhi Sabhas.<sup>40</sup>

In 1898, the question of Sikh separatism became both a legal as well as a public issue. Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, a Sikh aristocrat and philanthropist, died in September of that year, leaving his vast wealth to the Dyal Singh Trust. His widow, Sardarni Dyal Singh and her cousin, contested the will, claiming that the Hindu law of inheritance under which he had given his property in trust did not apply in that he was a Sikh and not a Hindu. Thus the Punjab High Court found itself faced with the question of determining whether Sikhs were or were not Hindus.

39. *Sat Dharm Prachārak*, August 13, 1897; *SPVP*, 1897, p. 765; and *Khālsa Bahādur* August 30, 1897; *SPV*, 1897, p. 800.

40. In mid-summer an Arya preacher, Gopal Das, was charged for having used disrespectful language toward Guru Nanak and the Sikh scriptures when he gave a lecture in the Guru ka Bagh in Amritsar. He was acquitted, but the case drew considerable attention in the press, especially in Sikh papers. See *Āfīāb-i-Punjab*, June 20, 1898; *SPVP*, 1898, pp. 414-15; and July 25, 1898; *SPVP*, 1898, p. 486. For later Sikh-Arya disputes, see *Akhhār-i-Ām*, February 18, 1899; *SPVP*, 1899, p. 112; *Sat Dharm Prachārak*, June 23, 1899; *SPVP*, 1899, p. 362; the *Khālsā Bahādur*, August 12, 1899; *SPVP*, 1899, p. 454; and Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, pp. 132-133.

Their decision that the Sardar was, in fact, a Hindu set off a great debate. Throughout 1898, 1899 and 1900, the issue was argued in public meetings, in the press, and through pamphlets. Bhai Jagat Singh, a Sikh member of the Arya Samaj, in his tract, *Risālā Sat Prakāsh* (Exposure of Truth), following previous arguments, attempted to prove that Sikhism was merely an earlier version of the Arya Samaj.<sup>41</sup> Lala Thakar Das and Bawa Narain Singh supported this position in *Sikh Hindū Hain* (Sikhs are Hindus),<sup>42</sup> while Sardar Kahan Singh, in his famous tract, *Ham Hindū Nahin* (We are not Hindus), laid the basis for Sikh claims to communal separatism.<sup>43</sup> This debate continued with undiminished vigour, creating considerable confusion within the Sikh community, for there now emerged a variety of Sikhs, from the pure Khalsa Sikh dedicated to his separateness to the Hindu-Sikh entrenched in his parent religion.

The young Khalsa has been in arms against all who have not agreed with his political and religious views and has been consistent in showing his disapproval of one and all who have had the misfortune of differing with him. Since the advent of the *Khalsā* (newspaper) we have had Hindu Sikhs, Sikh Sikhs, long-haired Hindus and other delicious classification of the admirers of Guru Nanak and his successors. But now, we learn, there is going to be further classification of genuine Khalsas and counterfeit Khalsas. We are certain that calling others by names does not make a nation, a people or a religion.<sup>44</sup>

Yet 'name-calling' enforced and heightened group consciousness, both as to membership within a community or sect and separateness from all others. Confusion of identity would be clarified through polemics and through the struggle of competing sects as representatives of their religious communities. The search for identity within the Sikh community and between Sikhs and Hindus became embroiled in the Samaj campaign to purify and thus save outcastes from Christian conversion.

Aryas had from time to time spoken out against the treatment of outcaste Hindus. The census reports showed clearly the nature of the danger which could materialize within this group. As Islam had converted heavily from the lowest segments of Hindu society, so, too, did Christian-

41. See *Tribune*, February 7, 1899, pp. 3-4.

42. Lala Thakar Das, *Sikh Hindū Hain* (Hoshiarpur: Khatri Press, 1899); and Bawa Narain Singh, *Sikh Hindū Hain* (Amritsar: Matba-Kaumi Press, 1899). Also see the account in Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, pp. 154, 133-34 and 137-38.

43. Sardar Kahan Singh, *Ham Hindū Nahin* (Amritsar: Khalsa Press, 1899).

44. *Tribune*, April 26, 1900, p. 4.

ity with increasing success. The untouchable levels of the Sikh community offered a similar field for conversion. As early as 1886 Samajists recognized this issue.

There is one point in connection with the caste system upon which I wish to address you most particularly. This consists in our practising a very bad moral tyranny upon a sect of our countrymen—who happen to believe in the same God as the other Hindus do, and recognize the same Scriptures as others do. I, of course, allude to the *Mazhabi* Sikhs. You know, gentlemen, the views in which the generality of *Mazhabi* Sikhs are held by us. A Muhammedan may touch and even share our bed but the very touch of a *Mazhabi* Sikh pollutes a Hindu, and his shadow even spoils the person of a Hindu.<sup>45</sup>

Humanitarian concern for the plight of the *Mazhabi* Sikhs was mixed with the recognized need to attach them firmly to the Hindu community.

It is said that these people number 70,000. If they be taken in, they will form a valuable acquisition to the ranks of the Hindu society. Reformers who are justly declaiming against the tyranny of the caste are requested to consider this question seriously. All our social organizations in the Punjab should take up the question, and prepare the minds of the generality of the people (Hindus) for receiving the *Mazhabi* Sikhs into their midst. I am very glad to see that several spirited gentlemen connected with the Arya Samaj are contemplating to take some steps in the matter; and as the question is really of great importance it should be taken up right earnest by the Arya Samaj, which on account of its being a national movement.

Arya attention to the *Mazhabi* Sikhs came in part from pressure by educated and economically rising *Mazhabis* who sought allies for their drive to elevate their traditional status. The Samaj discussed but did not act on such a radical proposal. By 1900, however, the question of transforming outcastes into pure castes found many adherents. Aryas who had witnessed the purification of outcastes by the Shuddhi Sabha decided to act, a decision hastened by pressure from the Sikh outcaste groups, the *Rahtias* of the Jullundur Doab. Weavers by tradition, the *Rahtias*, by 1900, possessed their own educated leaders who sought to improve their traditional caste status. The *Rahtias* first appealed to their own community, to prominent Sikhs, but received little encouragement.

45. Quotes given below from *Arya Patrika*, April 27, 1886, pp. 4-5, from a lecture by Lala Kunj Behari Thaper.

In frustration they turned next to radical Aryas who welcomed them and began plans for their entrance into pure caste society.

The Rahtias were outcaste Sikhs; once purified they would become pure Hindus, good Aryas, and apostates from Sikhism. On May 23, 1900, the *Khalsa* warned its readers of this impending *shuddhi*, exhibiting the mixed emotions of radical Sikh reformers concerned with communal solidarity. "In some previous issue we said that the Lahore Arya Samaj had resolved to convert the Rahtia Sikhs of the Jullundur district to the Aryan faith and that one condition of their conversion was that they should agree to part with the outward symbols of Sikhism. We further stated that dozens of the Rahtias had consented to the arrangement and that they were expected here shortly."<sup>46</sup> Much to its chargin the *Khālsā* admitted the unwillingness of Sikh reformers to aid the Mazahabis, even after being approached to do so by the leading Aryas. They could only warn of dire consequences if the proposed *shuddhi* was actually carried out. "We may, however, mention that the Rahtia Sikhs will be losers if they take shelter with the Arya Samaj. As soon as it is known that they have parted with the symbols of Sikhism it will be difficult for them to live peacefully in the villages inhabited by Sikhs. There is nothing which a Sikh hates more than an apostate from his faith, and knowing this as we do, we cannot congratulate our Rahtia brethren on their expected admission into the Arya Samaj." The *Khālsās* recognition that the Samajists had acted where orthodox and even reform Sikhs were unwilling to act, and its acceptance of a genuine grievance on the part of the Rahtias were lost after the actual purification; for then they too were swept away in a wave of indignation which briefly united the Sikh community.

The ceremony and Sikh reactions to it are given clearly in the pages of the *Khalsa* and the autobiography of its editor, Bhagat Lakshman Singh.<sup>47</sup> On June 2nd, the day before the actual ceremony, Bhagat Lakshman Singh joined in a futile attempt to dissuade the Rahtias from their announced plans. "As I was sitting at my lodging on the Ganpat Road, Lahore, Bhai Kanhaiya Singh, the well known coadjutor, and Dr Jai Singh of the defunct Shuddhi Sabha came to me and told me that some thirty Rahtia Sikhs (weavers by profession) had arrived and that the next morning they would be publicly shaved in the Arya Samaj, Wachhowali, before conversion to the Arya Samajist creed and that, if possible, they

46. Quotes given below from the *Khālsā*, May 23, 1900, p. 2.

47. Bhagat Lakshman Singh was as well a founding member of the Lahore Arya Samaj. His career is an excellent example of the changing identification patterns among some educated Sikhs.

should be dissuaded from taking such a step."<sup>48</sup> Lakshman Singh and a fellow reformer, Bhai Kanhaiya Singh, met the Rahtias in a vain attempt to retain them in the Sikh community. "Bhai Kanhaiya Singh addressed them a few words of advice. Their leader, Nagina Singh, accosted him with the reply that if we could assure them that the Sikhs would intermarry and inter-dine with them they would not even dream of going out of the Sikh fold. The demand was only in keeping with the promise made at the time of *Pahul* (baptismal) ceremony which was honoured more by its breach than by observance." The two reformers could not meet the Rahtia demand for equality within the Sikh community. They knew it, as did the Rahtias. They could speak for themselves, for other educated Sikhs, but not for the community. With so little to offer, Lakshman Singh suggested they leave. 'Let us depart, *Bhai Ji*' said I, 'we will meet this good man again when we are ourselves Sikhs in the real sense of term.' Saying this, I came out of the place thanking my friends of the Arya Samaj for their courtesy and kindness." The Khalsa Sikhs were trapped, for they did not speak as leaders of the entire Sikh community. Nevertheless, they returned the next morning for one more attempt to argue with the Rahtia leaders. Admitting their own limitations, the two Sikhs pointed out that the Aryas could as well speak only for themselves and not for the Hindu Community. Lakshman Singh stated that "we would and could obtain (for) them all privileges which were promised to them by Mahatma Munshi Ram's party, but that as the Mahatma and his party did not represent the orthodox Hindus and were unable to obtain them admission into the Sanatanist (orthodox) temples of Benares, we could not guarantee them full freedom in the matter of their admission into the Harimandir, Amritsar, then the stronghold of the orthodox Hinduized Sikhs. I could guarantee them free intercourse with Sikh Vakils and Barristers, educated Sikh *Reises* and so forth, possibly higher in social status than the men whose protection they then sought."<sup>49</sup>

Once again they failed to dissuade the Rahtias from their determination to be purified and so could only watch with growing horror as the ceremony progressed. Sikh outrage focused as much as the methods of *Shuddhi* as the fact of it, for the ceremony itself was in their eyes an insult to their faith. Each Rahtia received a sacred thread, was shaved of both beard and hair, introduced to the proper daily rituals, and in

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48. Quotes given below from Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, pp. 161-62.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

closing distributed sweets to the assembly.<sup>50</sup> The Sikh community was outraged at a public shaving and hair-cutting, while orthodoxy, both Hindu and Sikh, found the investiture of the sacred thread and inter-dining an affront to all they held sacred and proper. Among the Sikhs, the actual ceremony ended moderation. "When the time of initiation of the Rahtia Sikhs came, they were seated on a pulpit and their heads were shaved by a half a dozen barbers before hundreds of the multitude that had assembled to witness the performance. A sprinkling of Sikhs was also present but insult done to their feelings in such a public fashion drove them mad and they withdrew from the scene."<sup>51</sup> In the aftermath of the *shuddhi*, Sikhs held meetings of protest and passed resolutions condemning both the Samaj and the Rahtias.

Sikh frustration and anger soon sought to involve the government as the ultimate ally who could effectively terminate Arya purification of the Rahtias. "A fire has been lit on the 3rd of June, 1900, which if not got down in time might spread and consume them all. If the matters reached that, it would be difficult for any community, nay even for the Government, to put down the mischief without having recourse to violence. He regarded the conduct of the Aryas as neither more nor less than an attempt at mischief."<sup>52</sup> Simultaneously *Khālsā* critics attempted to denigrate Rahtia motives and criticize Sikh orthodoxy for its traditional discrimination of outcastes. "They know very well that the Rahtias who had taken shelter with them were not actuated from religious motives. They were all, generally speaking, men who had been oppressed by the Sikhs and Hindus for upwards of two centuries. They were all baptised men and according to the tenets of Sikhism they deserved to be treated as brothers by men who belonged to high-castes of the Hindus before their conversion to the Sikh creed. But Sikhs who had not given up their caste prejudices had studiously kept them down and had refused to listen to their demands which were perfectly just."

50. Reid Graham provides a description of one such ceremony. "The principal feature of the *Parvesh* ceremony (of *shuddhi*), was the investment of the person desiring admission with the *Yajnopavit Sanskar*. First there was the *Mundan* Ceremony or shaving the head; then all put on new *dhotis* (clothing), *Havan* was performed. The *Gayatri* was explained to them and then the *Yajnopavit Sanskar*, was performed. They were told their five daily duties and the sixteen *Sanskars* they were to perform. A copy of Dayanand's *Mahayajnavidhi* was given each. They were then declared to be in the Samaj. Almost all the people present took *Sherbat* at their hands." *The Arya Samaj*, p. 465.

51. *Khālsā*, June 6, 1900, pp. 3-4.

52. Quotes given below from *Khālsā*, June 13, 1900, pp. 3-4.

In the months that followed this purification other Rahtias came forward for *shuddhi*. The Lahore Samaj continued its drive to uplift the Rahtias and were joined by Samajes in Rupur district and as far west as Lyallpur.<sup>53</sup> With this widening campaign the Rahtia dispute spread well beyond Lahore. Rahtias returning to their villages met determined opposition to acceptance of their claim to pure caste status. Attempts by Rahtias to use village wells, hitherto barred to them, were defeated by their fellow villagers, at times violently.<sup>54</sup> Each incident further justified *Khālsā's* position that the Samaj was bent on disturbing the tranquility of the British *Raj*. "Should a great riot take place, of which there is not the least hope, we would then show to the officers of the Government what result there is in *yielding to any particular race of men* or showing them any particular favours. The Arya Samajists will bear whatever lot is in store for them; but it is the Government of the day that will suffer whose administration will be disturbed."<sup>55</sup> If the Government could not be moved to action by pleas then perhaps it would respond to threats. "We did the most ordinary thing in the world in pointing out to our rulers that if the Aryas were permitted to force the hands of the Sikhs villagers in permitting the Rahtia apostates to draw water from the village wells, the consequences might be unpleasant. We hoped that this warning would enable the officers of the Government to keep an eye over the manner in which the Aryas would behave in the matter." In the weeks that followed each continued to invoke the Government on his own side and to discredit his opponents in the eyes of officialdom. Governmental support could always mean victory. In the arithmetic of British India the Government plus one equalled a majority, and all groups no matter how large were reduced to minority status without the blessings of the *Raj*.<sup>56</sup>

The Rahtia purification and the resulting furor added new vigour and passion to the debate over Sikhs as Hindus. Books, newspapers, articles, tracts, and speeches argued for one position or the other.<sup>57</sup> By 1904 the

53. The *Khālsā*, June 13, 1900 p.2; July 25, 1900, p. 2; and *Arya Patrika*, December 8, 1900, p.7; quoted in Graham, *The Arya Samaj*, p.492.

54. *Khālsā*, July 4, 1900, p. 3; and *Tribune*, June 28, 1900, p. 3.

55. Quotes given below from *Khālsā*, August 8, 1900, pp. 3-4.

56. *Khālsā*, August 15, 1900, p. 3.

57. See *Akḥbār-i-Ām*, March 13, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 168 and March 25, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 202; April 2, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 202; April 2, 1901, p. 220; *Sat Dharm Prachārak*, March 21, 1902; *SPVP*, 1902, pp. 217-8; *Khālsā Akḥbār*, July 18, 1902; *SPVP*, 1902, pp. 475-76; *Tribune*, October 30, 1902, p. 5; Mahan Singh Omakari, *Sāhib Diyāl ke Parāgrandah Khayālon ki Partāl* (A Repayment for the

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'College' Aryas, who had been longest and most closely allied to reformist Sikhs, defected to the enemy. In an article entitled "The Cat is out of the Bag," appearing in *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, in November 1904, this old alliance was proclaimed dead.

In the recent two issues of *Arya Gazette*, Lahore, there have appeared two articles headed '*Sikhon ka Ruhani Doctor*' [A Spiritual Doctor for Sikhism] in which the impudent writer has in a manner insulted the Sikhs and their sacred religion. The language of the articles is decidedly harsher than that of the *Sat Dharam Pracharak* even which is considered a scurrilous reviler of the Sikhs. Now it is gratifying to let it be known to our readers that the cultured Hindus have openly commenced to oppose the Khalsa, i.e., they have removed the trap and taken up a cudgel which the Khalsa is brave enough to break into pieces.<sup>58</sup>

With this rejection of Aryan support came as well the rejection of *shuddhi* as a concept that was essentially Hindu. Sikhism, unlike Hinduism, was and always had been a conversion religion and needed no new ritual of entrance. "Thus it was that a man—a Hindu, Moslem or Christian by birth as the doors of Sikhism are open to all—who embraced Sikhism by taking the holy *Amrita* was said to have undergone the *Shuddhi* purificatory operation just as an apostate from Hinduism after being purified was regarded by the Arya Samajis." *Shuddhi* then could be dispensed with in favour of the traditional Sikh baptism and Sikhs need not associate themselves with Hindu proselytization. "In our opinion *Shuddhi* is not a suitable word and ought not to be used by the Sikhs. For us, all non-Sikhs, Hindus, Muhammadans, etc., are equally misguided in their faiths, they are riding boats that are doomed to lead astray from the path leading to God... Ours is a ship, *Jahaz*, of the *Wahiguroo's* or Almighty's name and he who sitteth in it is sure to cross [the] ocean of the world safely, be he of any caste or creed before."

Having abandoned cooperation in the area of roconversion, educated Sikh leaders sought to define their community around the symbols

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Dirty Tricks of Sahib Dayal), Amritsar: Wazir Hind press, 1904; Bhai Ganda Singh, *Nuskha-i-Khabat-i-Dayanāndiyān* (Prescriptions for the Insanity of the Followers of Dayanand), Amritsar: Amar Press, 1904; An Answer to Lala Sahib Dyal's *Ilāj-i-Wāḥmat-i-Ditt Singhia* (Remedy for the Whims of Ditt Singh); and Bawa Chhajju Singh, *The Ten Gurus and Their Teachings*, Lahore: Punjab Printing Works, 1903.

58. Quotes given below from *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, November 8, 1904, p. 5.

of the Sikhs' past, including that most powerful determinant of separatism, linguistic identity. As Hindi in the Devanagiri script defined the revived Hindu, so Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script came to symbolize the demands for a separate Sikh identity.

Now whether Punjabi or Hindi should replace Urdu has again become a burning topic of the day. Those who for bigotry's sake wanted Hindi to become the court language, which is nonetheless a foreign language like Persian and Urdu, finding that they will meet with utter failure in this attempt, have now commenced to argue that for the Punjab there should be no language other than Punjabi, but it should be written in Hindi characters instead of in the Gurmukhi characters . . . we shall show how foolish and biased their view is. On our part we are confident that such noises as have been made against the Punjabi being written in Gurmukhi characters are doomed to go effectless.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout the years 1901 to 1903 Sikhs debated with Aryas on the meaning of Sikhism, on their separateness from the Hindu community, and on alleged job discrimination by the government, as economic competition between educated Sikhs and Hindus added fuel to the existing communal competition.<sup>60</sup>

In 1905 attempts by Sikh reformers to purge their religion of idolatry produced a direct confrontation with Hindu orthodoxy over the most sacred of all Sikh institutions, the Golden Temple at Amritsar. The same dynamics which led Aryas to criticize orthodox Sikhism now drove reformist Sikhs to condemn orthodox Hinduism. The customary performance of Hindu rituals in the temple compound offended reformers who saw this both as contrary to Sikh beliefs and the intrusion of a decadent faith. The manager of the temple ordered that all Hindu idols should be excluded from the temple precincts, thus ending the performance of Hindu rituals in the area. Hindus reacted with outrage at this attack on their traditional privileges.

The lamentable dissensions that are dividing the orthodox and the ultra-radical Sikhs, and creating an ever-widening gulf between

59. *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, May 16, 1904, p. 7; also see *Tribune*, September 1, 1900, p. 4; September 27, 1900, p. 5; and October 13, 1900, p. 5.

60. *Khālsā Bahādūr*, January 24, 1901, *SPVP*, 1901, p. 15; *Sat Dharm Prachārak*, February 1, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 123; *Sanātan Dharm Gazette*, January 31, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 153; *Akhhār-i-Ām*, April 17, 1901; *SPVP*, 1901, p. 266; *Ahluwalia Gazette*, August 1, 1902; *SPVP*, 1902, p. 436; *Ahluwalia Gazette*, August 16, 1902; *SPVP*, 1902, p. 467; *Public Gazete*, November 24, 1902; *SPVP*, p. 583.

the latter and the Hindu community, have come to a head owing to the recent thoughtless and injudicious action of the Manager of the Golden Temple. This holy shrine at Amritsar is held in equal veneration by Sikh and non-Sikh Hindus throughout the Province. According to the latter, bathing at the *Har-ki-Paori* (the celebrated *ghat* immediately in the rear of the fane) is as efficacious in washing away sin as the performance of prescribed ablutions at the quay of the same name on the Ganges at Hardwar. On auspicious days, therefore, vast crowds of Hindus congregate on the banks of the 'Lake of Immortality' (the large and beautiful tank surrounding the Temple) to have a dip in the sacred water.<sup>61</sup>

A bath at the Golden Temple provided for Hindus a sacred cleansing and was followed by worship of a Hindu deity. Now Sikhs reformers would end this practice and with it the traditional privileges of the Brahmans who officiated at these ceremonies.

The Brahmans with their idols of stone and metal had occupied their appointed places on the top of the stairs from the time that Amritsar became a place of pilgrimage. During the time that the Punjab was ruled by the Twelve Misls of the Khalsa, and during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they enjoyed a share of the bounties and largesse bestowed on the other attendants and dependants of the Temple. The Sikh Chiefs and Reises [nobles], whenever they have visited the Mandir, have seldom forgotten their claims to charity. ... But the manager of the Temple, Sardar Arur Singh, turned them out of the precincts of the Temple a few days ago on the ground, it is said, that they were idol-worshipping intruders on the sanctity of a monotheistic Temple.

In the ensuing melee of protest meetings, tracts, newspaper articles and letters to the press, reformed Sikhs fought against their own religious establishment, against claims that they were weakening their community from within, and setting Hindu against Sikhs. Some blamed the British for "apparently the doctrine of 'divide and rule,' which has had more or less acceptance at headquarters during all these years, has at last succeeded in making its entrance into the Golden Temple at Amritsar..."<sup>62</sup> While others hurled epithets at existing and newly discovered enemies.<sup>63</sup>

61. Quotes given below from *Tribune*, May 11, 1905, p. 3.

62. *Punjabee*, May 15, 1905, p. 1.

63. See *Akhbār-i-Ām*, May 16, 1905; *SPVP*, 1905; *Tribune*, May 18, 1905, p. 5; *Tribune*, May 20, 1905, p. 5; *Punjabee*, May 22, 1905, p. 3; *Tribune*, May 23, 1905, p.

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In the years following this controversy Sikhs would come in increasingly to struggle over issues of power and leadership within their community and in defence of Sikhism as a separate entity. The days of even limited co-operation between Hindu and Sikh reformers had ended and were replaced by a world of communal mobilization. Some applauded this sense of religious and communal militancy—others grieved. In a letter to the *Panjabee*, an educated Sikh, Hari Singh Majithia, B.A., described accurately the Punjabi world of 1905: "Sir,—These are the days of religious commotion, all religions are under violent fermentation. One day brings an asserting prophet on the stage, while the next produces a newly organized sect more rigid and repellent in ideas, and unpurified from the grosser elements of a former noble religion. Such is the Tat Khalsa of to-day, young in aspirations, but more violent and impractical than the old Sikhism, it inculcates an indirect and insulting method of progress, deviating from the wonderful teaching of the Gurus."<sup>64</sup> Radical reform among Sikhs appeared divisive, destructive of broader communal unity. Instead of creating unity, it pitted group against group in endless struggle. "You are not a nation but a wriggling mass of repellent particles, never presenting yourself to the fore with a united front, but quarrelling with each other like deadly enemies in the battle-field." The writer could only plead for an end to religious bickering and its accompanying militancy with a return to the past days of Hindu-Sikh unity, which many believed existed in the Punjab past. "Consider Hindus your brethern, be united, have common feeling and common thoughts, make yourself good managers and show the world to be such. Whether you are doomed to fail or succeed, be ye men of contemplation ! In the end I can repeat the words of Dr Johnson's address to Goldsmith 'I have found you a reason Sir, I am not bound to find you an understanding.'

For many Punjabis, such as Hari Singh Majithia, an understanding proved difficult. They witnessed a world steadily plunged into communal mobilization, into internal strife between proponents of change and defenders of orthodoxy. Dissension did not abate but accelerated as the implications of modernity cut deeper into Punjabi life. The functioning

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4; *Panjabee*, May 29, 1905, p. 3; *Tribune*, May 30, p. 5; June 1, 1905, p. 5; July 1, 1905, p. 5; June 3, 1905, p. 5; *Panjabee*, July 3, 1905, p. 3; *Tribune*, June 3, 1905, p. 3; June 8, 1905, p. 5; *Panjabee*, July 10, 1905, p. 1; *Tribune*, June 22, 1905, p. 5; August 1, 1905, p. 3; *Arya Messenger*, August 1, 1905; *SPVP*, 1905, pp. 276-77; and *Sat Dharm Pracharak*, September 1, 1905; *SPVP*, p. 323.

64. Quotes given below from *Panjabee*, June 12, 1905, p.3.

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of British law, questions of educational policy, the impact of a decennial census, and missionary proselytization all contributed to a sense of religious separatism. The printing press which now permanently recorded religious controversies magnified them. Polemics could not be limited only to those against whom they were directed. All read and reacted to this literature of debate. The clash between sect and sect, between reformers and orthodoxy placed a premium on overt behaviour as signs of group membership or of ideological purity. To eat meat or to attend worship at a given temple joined with older forms of religious distinction as badges of commitment and identity.

Aryas, in their own search for a new identity based on a respectable and defensible Hinduism, shorn of much of its traditional structure contributed to the destruction of bonds between the Sikhs and Hindu communities. Similar processes within the the Sikh community led to a heightening of Sikh identity. With the Golden Temple controversy of 1905, radical Sikh reformers began the process of breaking with orthodox Hinduism following their already bitter struggles with Aryas and reforming Hindus. The parallel search for identity between Sikhs and Hindus now ran in separate channels. Sikh reformers turned inward toward a struggle for control within their own community, a struggle which would dominate the Sikh community throughout the next two decades. Increasingly Aryas and Hindus lay beyond the world of Sikhism and urgent calls for unity or exclamations of lament could not reverse this process of division into distinct communities. Sikhs in future years might debate who they were, but they knew with increasing certainty who they were not : *Ham Hindu Nahin* (We are Not Hindus).

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## The Non-Co-operation Movement in Haryana, 1920-22

M.M. JUNEJA\*

The Rowlatt Act, the parent of the non-co-operation movement<sup>1</sup> was enacted on March 18, 1919, which conferred upon the Government of India extraordinary powers for the arrest of individuals and their imprisonment without trial, when the war-time emergency ordinances lapsed. A nation-wide agitation was started against the Rowlatt Bill when it was introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council. In trying to suppress this agitation in the Punjab, indescribable atrocities were perpetrated by the forces of the Crown. At Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar,<sup>2</sup> the heart of Punjab, on April 13, 1919, there was a massacre of unarmed men, women and children who had assembled there. At the same time, the Muslims of India became anti-British when they came to know that the allies were aiming at nothing less than the complete dismemberment of Turkey.<sup>3</sup> By 1920, the Muslims began sensing that probably Turkey would cease to exist as an independent state and that the Sultan would be deprived of his territories in Europe and Asia, and the Holy places of Islam would pass into non-Muslim hands. The realisation of this impending calamity produced a blaze of resentment among every section of Muslim community in India. But howsoever deep their resentment might be, they were not in a position to take up arms against the victorious British Government.

By the middle of 1920, anti-British feelings among the Muslims had grown stronger than those of the rest of the Indian population. The Punjab atrocities and their sequel made a rebel of the once loyal M.K. Gandhi, who collected his forces for leading a revolt against the British Government. About this time, the Ali-Brothers<sup>4</sup> and other Muslim leaders were

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1. Banerjee, Surinder Nath, *A Nation in Making* (London, 1927), p. 300.

2. Mahatma Gandhi said in December 1919 'Plassey laid the foundation of the British Empire, Amritsar has shaken it.' Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru* (New Delhi, 1969), p. 81.

3. The *Sultan* of Turkey was the head of the Islamic Church and known as the *Khalifa*.

4. The leadership of the *Khilafat* movement was assumed by the Ali-Brothers, Maulana Mohammad Ali, the younger but more influential, and Maulana Shaukat

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preparing to launch *Khilafat* movement and they, too, were looking out for allies. So an alliance was at once struck between Gandhi and Ali-Brothers on the basis of two issues, viz., the Punjab atrocities and the *Khilafat* grievances.<sup>5</sup> The Ali-Brothers and their followers while keeping up a separate organisation—the All India *Khilafat* Committee—would join the Indian National Congress and agitate for the attainment of political freedom, which was the only guarantee against such wrongs in future. Mr. M.K. Gandhi, with deep self-confidence and a sense of purpose, persuaded the Indian National Congress to adopt a new constitution, which declared the attainment of *Swaraj* or self-rule by peaceful and legitimate means as the aim of the Congress. Gandhi, then, spelled out his programme of non-violent non-co-operation.

From August 1920 to March 1922, the non-co-operation movement was sustained by enthusiasm, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit of the people, who, lacking in organisation, experience and discipline, were pitted against unlimited material resources—army, police, administrative machinery and funds. It was a fight between 'soul force' and 'material force' or two wills—the will of freedom and the will to dominate. The movement launched by Gandhi had two aspects which may be called positive and negative, or constructive and destructive.

The former included the promotion of *Swadeshi*, removal of untouchability, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition of the use of alcoholic drinks, and the collection of a crore of rupees for the memorial of Tilak in the shape of a *Swarajya* Fund. The negative side is usually referred to as the triple boycott: namely, boycott of legislatures, courts, and educational institutions, both schools and colleges, maintained or aided by the Government. The minor items of boycott included surrender of titles, honours, etc. Some constructive work was directly necessitated by the 'destructive' programme: such as setting up of arbitration boards

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Ali, the elder. Both of them were Oxford graduates. Maulana Mohammad Ali had been a journalist and Moulana Shaukat-Ali a highly paid officer in the Excise Department of the Government of India. During the First World War both of them had been interned for carrying on propaganda against the British Government and in favour of Turkey. The agitation following in the wake of their imprisonment had made them prominent in the public eye and when the *Khilafat* movement began, it was natural that they should be invested with the crown of leadership. Moreover, their dress and mode of life, shaped according to orthodox Muslim ideas, made a strong appeal to the Muslim masses and served to make them tremendously popular.

5. Bose, Subhash Chander, *The Indian Struggle*, 1920-1942, p. 42.

to take the place of courts and national schools and colleges, where students leaving Government schools and colleges might continue their education. By a reverse process, the boycott of foreign goods, particularly foreign cloth, required the promotion of *Swadeshi*.<sup>6</sup>

As soon as the epoch-making movement was translated into practice, the leaders of Haryana such as Lala Murli Dhar, Lala Duni Chand Ambalvi, Pandit Neki Ram Sharma, Mr. K.A. Desai, Babu Sham Lal, to mention only a few, realised that to extort the maximum support of the people of their region, it was essential that they must be touched by the magical presence of the author, architect, and engineer of the campaign—Gandhi. So the prominent leaders of Haryana approached Gandhi and his close associates from time to time to pay visits to Haryana. Immediately after the Calcutta Special Session and the Nagpur Session, the Mahatma<sup>7</sup> made tours of Haryana in order to popularize the movement.

On October 8, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi and Ali-Brothers visited Rohatak, where they were received and welcomed by the people enthusiastically.<sup>8</sup> A huge public meeting organised by Babu Sham Lal, Sardar Boota Singh and Mohammad Shafi was held in their honour. While addressing, Mahatma Gandhi assailed the British Policy towards Turkey and alleged it as an act of betrayal. Further, he exhorted the audience to get themselves united to secure the *Swaraj* and for the sake of this noble cause they should not hesitate even to court arrest. Ali-Brothers also addressed the meeting and Moulana Shaukat Ali gave the battle cry: "Death is better than slavery."<sup>9</sup> Again, Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Ali-Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Swami Satya Dev and Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi visited Bhiwani on October 22, 1920, to attend and address the Ambala Divisional Conference.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly, it was the proudest day in the history of Haryana. A long procession was arranged in his welcome and that was rightly described by a popular contemporary newspaper as "a triumphant march of Democracy in a backward rural city."<sup>11</sup> The whole city thundered with cries of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai." At

6. Majumdar, R. C. (Ed.), *Struggle for Freedom*, pp. 337-38.

7. At Nagpur (December, 1920), Gandhi emerged as the virtual Dictator of the Congress. He was, moreover, spontaneously acclaimed by the people as *Mahatma*; meaning literally a high-souled man or saint. That was the highest tribute that an Indian could give him.

8. Prabhakar, Devi Shankar, *Swadhinata Sangram Aur Haryana* (Hindi), p. 164.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Home Political File No. 76 (D), December 1920 (NAI).

11. *The Tribune*, October 27, 1920.



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Bhiwani, Mahatma Gandhi expressed and explained the urgent need of the non-cooperation. Describing his staunch faith in the efficacy of the movement, he said that it could make Indians free and get them *Swaraj* within a year. Furthermore, he appealed to the masses that they must leave government services, courts, schools, colleges, councils, titles, etc., and to adopt *Khaddar*, arrange their own *Panchayats* and maintain Hindu Muslim unity. Once again, Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders of national repute like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Lala Pyare Lal and Lala Lajpat Rai, visited Haryana to address the Rural Conferences held at Bhiwani, Kalanaur and Rohtak from February 15 to 16, 1921.<sup>12</sup> Addressing crowded gatherings, Gandhi exhorted the people to remain non-violent even in the case of provocation, whether from government or from amongst themselves. He said that the non-co-operation movement stood for the purification of people from all social evils such as untouchability among the Hindus, addiction to intoxicants, communal disharmony, and so on. Simultaneously, he asked the masses not to enlist themselves in Military and Police services. Similar visits were paid by Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shradhanand and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Haryana during the period of non-co-operation movement individually, too. Swami Shradhanand toured Karnal in June 1921,<sup>13</sup> where he addressed a public meeting in which he delivered an impressive lecture on *Charkha* and *Swadeshi*. Lala Lajpat Rai paid a visit to Bhiwani on July 16, 1921.<sup>14</sup> A crowded meeting was arranged in his honour where he urged the people to use *Swadeshi* goods and requested the merchantile class to give up the trade in foreign goods. On November 21, 1921, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad visited Bhiwani and addressed a huge public meeting of 15,000 in white and chaste *Khaddar*.<sup>15</sup> He took a solemn pledge from them to make cloth out of purely hand-spun yarn in future.

The impact of above cited tours made by the great leaders of the day, especially Mahatma Gandhi, was so tremendous that the atmosphere in Haryana was surcharged with excitement. The common people of Haryana thought that God had sent a saintly man to lead them to freedom and followed him with blind faith. Thus, Haryana was in the throes of a mass upsurge, a revolt that spread even to the remotest village.

12. Juneja, M. M., *Haryana and the Swadeshi Movement*, Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 1976, p. 227.

13. *The Tribune*, June 11, 1921.

14. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1921.

15. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1921.

Among those who gave up their professional work in response to the appeal of the Congress, the lawyers played a most important part. The example of lawyer-princes like Deshbandhu Dass and Pandit Motilal Nehru was followed by lesser lights among the lawyer-fraternity throughout India and as a result, the Congress ranks were replenished by a large number of whole-time workers of standing and influence. The gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants was one of the remarkable achievements made in Haryana. Well-known lawyers like Lala Duni Chand Ambalvi, Babu Sham Lal, Sham Lal Satyagrahi, Ram Krishan Bakshi, Babu Jugal Kishore and several others, gave up their lucrative legal practice and jumped into the movement. The appeal of the Congress for boycott of law-courts met with fair measures of success. While a large number of lawyers gave up their practice, there was, on the other hand, an intensive campaign to dissuade litigants from approaching British law courts and persuade them to settle their disputes by arbitration. As a matter of fact, arbitration boards under the control of the Congress came into existence all over the country and owing to their efforts the Government revenue from litigation was considerably reduced. In Haryana it was partially successful. On May 26, 1921, Mr. K.A. Desai inaugurated the *Rashtriya Nayalaya* (National Court) at Bhiwani where six benches were established and litigants had begun sending their cases.<sup>16</sup> The *Tehsildar* and Honorary Munsiff's Courts became practically useless at Bhiwani. Similar examples were also followed by other towns of Haryana.

Along with the boycott of law-courts, a campaign was started for stopping the use of intoxicants of all kinds. The success of this campaign was remarkable throughout India and in many provinces the excise revenue from the trade in liquor and other intoxicants was reduced to one-third of what it formerly was. In Haryana, the campaign against the consumption of intoxicants was carried out almost in all the towns, successfully. The picketing of liquor shops became the order of the day and hundreds of Haryanayis resolved to give up the bad habit of drinking and the use of other intoxicants such as opium, *bhang*, *charas*, etc., and as a result, the revenue of the then Punjab Government declined substantially.

In order to afford some measure of economic relief to the masses, the Congress advocated the boycott of foreign cloth and the revival of hand spinning and hand weaving on a large scale. The All India Congress Committee meeting at Bezwada on March 31, 1921, passed a resolution

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16. *Ibid.*, May 30, 1921.

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"calling upon all workers to concentrate chiefly on introducing 20 lakhs of spinning wheels in Indian households to promote *Swadeshi* before June 30, 1921."<sup>17</sup> The Haryana's share of the national work, outlined by the Committee, was the distribution of 9,800 spinning wheels.<sup>18</sup> To achieve the target, several national volunteers went door to door not only in towns but also in villages of Haryana, advocating the cause of spinning wheels and the people responded readily. Most probably Hissar district was the first district in Haryana and one among the selected districts in India, where every home, rich or poor, could boast of having at least one spinning wheel by June 30, 1921.<sup>19</sup> The contribution of Rohtak district towards *Swadeshi* movement was remarkable. By the end of June 1921, not only the wheels of 2,000 spinning wheels moved on, but 5,000 *Khaddis* (handlooms) also started manufacturing *Khaddar* quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>20</sup> The boycott of foreign cloth and the encouragement of *Swadeshi* was carried in Haryana enthusiastically. Not only the common rung of the society but also urban intelligentsia was drawn into the campaign. The success of *Swadeshi* made in Haryana, impressed even Mahatma Gandhi. He was surprised to see the arrangements of Bhiwani and Rohtak conferences which were totally of *Swadeshi* character.<sup>21</sup> Numerous bonfides of foreign clothes were made almost in all the towns of Haryana, in which the cloth valued at thousands of rupees was reduced to ashes. The people took out big processions exhibiting their support to the cause of complete boycott of foreign cloth. Several traders of Haryana dealing in foreign cloth pledged themselves not to import foreign cloth in future. By the beginning of 1922 most of the Haryanavis had done away with the ginning cloth and *Khaddar* was seen almost everywhere.<sup>22</sup> In other words, foreign cloth had become foreign to the temperament of Haryana.

To undertake the above work, both men and money were required. The Mahatma, therefore, appealed to the nation for ten million members for the Congress and a fund of ten million rupees. The response of the people of Haryana to this appeal proved to be encouraging but in order to go round collecting money and enlisting members, an initial band of workers was necessary. These workers had to be supplied by the student

17. Majumdar, R. C., *History of Freedom Movement in India*, vol. III, p. 102.

18. *The Tribune*, June 11, 1921.

19. Juneja, M. M., *op. cit.*, p. 229.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Gandhi, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 456.

22. Juneja, M. M., *op. cit.*, p. 231.

community and the year 1921, therefore, began with an extensive campaign for the boycott of schools and colleges. To involve the students in the movement, leaders of Haryana like Pandit Neki Ram Sharma, Babu Sham Lal, Lala Daulat Ram Gupta and Master Baldev Singh addressed several students meetings, inciting them to follow the examples of ancient times when the students community stood for the right cause of righteousness and truth. These examples were quoted from old *Shastras* and *Puranas*. Students of Rohtak, Bhiwani, Hissar, etc., responded to the appeal in large number and gave up their studies and jumped into the non-co-operation movement. A number of collegiates hailing from Haryana (studying at Delhi and Lahore) also left their respective colleges to further the movement—Pandit Shri Ram Sharma, Deshbandhu Gupta, Lekh Ram Sharma, Madan Gopal were some of the prominent students who followed suit.<sup>23</sup> The Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School and Vaish High School of Rohtak were got disaffiliated from the Punjab University and were converted into National schools.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the students of Rohtak, Bhiwani, Sirsa and Dabwali collected 80,000 rupees for Tilak Swaraj Fund by November 1921.<sup>25</sup> The people of Haryana made liberal contribution to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. In the Conference held at Bhiwani on February 15, 1921, Gandhi received a sum of sixty thousand rupees in cash from the audience and the womenfolk offered to contribute their ornaments and valuables, too.<sup>26</sup> Ladies' groups led by Mrs. Purani Devi, Mrs. K.A. Desai, Mrs. Duni Chand and Mrs. Sham Lal Satyagrahi made home to home collection for the fund in their respective districts.

The programme adopted at Nagpur in December 1921, called upon the people to renounce their titles conferred by the alien government and to resign the government posts. The people of Haryana gave prompt response to this call. Lala Murli Dhar of Ambala renounced his title of *Rai Sahib* conferred upon him in 1898. He also surrendered his *Sanad*, Badge and *Kaiser-i-Hind* silver medal, bestowed upon him in 1904 for public services.<sup>27</sup> Several *Lamberdars* and *Zaildars* of Haryana resigned from their respective jobs and became active non-co-operators.

One of the most exciting items of the non-co-operation movement

23. Personal Interviews with Pandit Shri Ram Sharma, Vaid Lekh Ram Sharma and Dr. Madan Gopal.

24. Juneja, M.M., *Pandit Neki Ram Sharma and the Non-co-operation Movement op. cit.*, 1976, p. 267.

25. AICC File 19/1930, p. 73, NMM &L.

26. Gandhi, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, pp. 360-61.

27. *The Tribune*, August 16, 1920.

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was the boycott of legislature. All the Congress candidates had withdrawn from the contest in obedience to mandate of the Calcutta Congress and all seats were filled up by non-Congressmen. The Congress succeeded in proving to the world that the Legislative Council elected under the new Constitution had no claim to represent the people of India.<sup>28</sup> The call of boycott of election met with an encouraging response in Haryana. At several public meetings resolutions were passed accepting the boycott of Legislative Council and refraining from polling. A number of contestants such as Lala Duni Chand Ambalvi, Babu Sham Lal and Lala Harkrishan Dutta,<sup>29</sup> withdrew their candidatures and most of the voters did not cast their votes.

The boycott of the visit of Prince of Wales met with a spectacular success. The All India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay on July 28, 1921, decided to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales.<sup>30</sup> The Congress launched a programme to foil the preparations made by the Government for the reception of the Royal Guest at Bombay. Pandit Neki Ram Sharma went all the way from Bhiwani to Bombay to make the Congress move, a success. His services were appreciated by Gandhi even.<sup>31</sup> On the eve of the Prince's arrival, *hartals* were observed almost throughout Haryana.

The fact is that the complete *hartal* that greeted the arrival of the Prince of Wales in India radically changed the policy of the Government of India. The Government issued a notification, declaring the Congress and *Khilafat* volunteers' agitation as unlawful. Thus, after a number of months of inactivity, the Government declared open war against the non-co-operators and the whole of India watched with a thrill the results of the first encounter between the armed might of the powerful British Government and the non-violent non-co-operation. More than hundred persons hailing from Haryana were arrested while taking active participation in the movement.<sup>32</sup> Whenever the non-co-operators were arrested in Haryana, the people used to hold demonstrations, public meetings, etc., in which the services of the arrested patriots were eulogised and resolutions congratulating them were passed. The people assembled at their respective Railway Stations to welcome their beloved arrested leaders when the prisoners were being transported from one place to other. Practically

28. IAR, 1924, Part II, p. 205.

29. Personal Interview with Lala Harkrishan Datta on 19-8-1977, at Hissar.

30. Majumdar (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 343.

31. *The Young India*, December, 1921.

32. Sharma, Shri Ram, *Haryana ka Itihas* (Rohtak, 1974) p. 69.

speaking, the impact of the repressive policy of the Government was that it boosted the morale of the Haryanavis.

Suddenly there came a bolt from the blue which left the people speechless and dumb founded—the incident at Chauri-Chaura.<sup>33</sup> No one could understand why Mahatma should have used the isolated incident at Chauri-Chaura for strangling the movement all over the country. To sound the order of retreat just when the public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity. A wave of resentment swept across the whole land of Haryana too.<sup>34</sup>

During the days of the non-co-operation movement, Hindu-Muslim unity was retained by the people of Haryana. When the elections took place, the Muslims as well as Hindus boycotted them. The people objected to the formation of wards on communal grounds. Simultaneous slogans like 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' and 'Allah-hu-Akbar' could be heard in each and every public gathering. The people of Haryana courted arrests irrespective of their caste and creed. After the great revolt of 1857, Hindu-Muslim unity was repeated during the 18 months of the non-co-operation movement for the first time.

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[Historically speaking, Haryana as a separate State did not exist during 1920-22. It was a part of the then Panjab. —Ed.]

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33. On February 4, 1922, at a place called Chauri-Chaura in the United Provinces, the villagers in a fit of exasperation set fire to the police station and killed some policemen.

34. Yadav, K.C., *Haryana ka Itihas*, p. 224.

## Some Critical Periods of Sikh History

FAUJA SINGH

### I

#### **Guru Hargobind and His Struggle against the Mughals**

In its course of about 500 years, the history of the Sikhs has passed through more than half a dozen periods of crisis when the very existence of the community was at stake, owing either to the deadly blows struck by the authorities of the day or the disintegration caused by internal dissensions and mutual jealousies of the Sikhs themselves. However, each time, the Sikhs were not only able to weather the storm successfully, but also to come out of the ordeal with a glow of enthusiasm which proved to be the precursor of a fresh round of progress and glory. Mr. Malcolm has, most appropriately, likened the Sikh nation to "a suppressed flame which rises into higher splendour from every attempt to crush them."

The first of these crisis occurred at the time of the pontificate of Guru Hargobind, 1606-44, when the peaceful, social and religious Sikh movement was brought to a sense of grave danger by the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, which was, as is absolutely clear from the autobiography of Emperor Jahangir, a deliberate and premeditated attempt on the part of the Government, to arrest the further growth of this movement and, if possible, to nip it in the bud. The reason was this. The Sikh movement, ever since its founder, Guru Nanak, had been steadily growing in organisation, strength and numbers. So long as Akbar had been the ruler, its progress had continued unhampered under the influence of his liberalism, but with the advent of Jahangir's rule, the Mughal religious policy began to undergo a change, with the result that signs of political danger began to be read in the growing proportions of the Sikh movement. A determination was soon made by the Emperor to put it down with a heavy hand. The pivot of the movement, the Guru (then Guru Arjan) was soon arrested, was ordered on pain of death to embrace Islam and on his refusal to oblige the Emperor, was tortured to death.

However, the effect produced was exactly the reverse of what was expected by the Mughal Government. Instead of succumbing to the oppressors and persecutors, Guru Hargobind, son and successor of Guru Arjan Dev, took up the challenge and started organising a powerful

movement of resistance against them. On the very occasion of his accession, he departed from the traditional practice of wearing *saili* and put on two swords, one to represent spiritual and the other, temporal interests, as a symbol of the new shape of things to come. This was soon followed by a hectic military activity which included the building up of the fort of Lohgarh at Amritsar, purchase of arms and horses, enlistment and training of fighters, and instillation of martial spirit.

Guru Hargobind started with the creation of a small body-guard of 52 stalwarts. But once the intentions of their Divine Master became widely known, numbers of Sikhs flocked to him from Majha, Malwa and Doaba, thereby largely increasing the strength of his followers. As the troops thus raised were predominantly a cavalry force, a centrally organised stable for the supply of remounts was maintained by the Guru. As soon as a considerable number of people had joined, they were divided into groups of about 100 each and put under different commanders such as Bidhi Chand, Pirana, Jetha, Paira and Langaha, who were made responsible for the training of their followers. As time went on and particularly when the relations of the Guru got strained with Shah Jahan from 1628 to 1634, the number and the organisation of this army developed further. Though the basic unit probably remained a group of one hundred horses, the number of such units to be placed under commanders varied with their experience, ability and devotion. Some of them like Bhai Jetha were even given a command of 200 horses. It is not, however, known how the commanders of horses more than 100 managed their men, but it may be presumed that they had subordinate commanders to assist them. At the head of the entire force was the Guru himself who imparted cohesion and unity to the whole organisation and acted as commander-in-chief. Apart from training, the above mentioned organisation was useful for the disposition and employment of troops during the battle.

The question of enlistment presented no difficulty. The areas known as Majha, Malwa and Doaba formed an excellent recruiting ground, inhabited as they were by the sturdy and warlike *Jats* who had fortunately been brought into the fold of Sikhism by the preceding Gurus. The petty warfare constantly going on amongst them had long accustomed them to the use of weapons. The simple but invigorating creed of the Gurus had further infused in them a spirit which created heroes out of them, ever ready to dare and die for their beloved faith. They were no mercenaries who would place money and their lives above everything else, but gallant warriors willing to sacrifice their all for the cause they held so dear.

The vast majority of the Guru's army naturally consisted of Sikhs,



#### SOME CRITICAL PERIODS OF SIKH HISTORY

because their deep faith in Sikhism gave them a dependability not paralleled by any body else. However, the Guru was never hesitant to employ people of other faiths as well, provided any really brave men were forthcoming for the purpose, and he actually engaged a small band of Pathans under the leadership of Painda Khan. But this experiment proved an utter failure as, after some years, these Pathans not only deserted the Guru, but also egged on the Mughals to attack him in 1634.

It was a voluntary corps based upon a religious principle. The soldiers expected no pay and received none. The only exception was the small band of Pathans who were engaged on daily wages, Painda Khan, the Commander, getting Rs. 5/- a day. The rest of the soldiery were contented with the free supply of meals, clothes, arms and horses. Some of them even brought their own arms and horses—so much was their devotion to their master ! The Guru was no king and had no state with the revenue of which he could maintain his army. His only source of income was the offerings of his devoted followers, deposited in his treasury called '*Guru-ki-Golak*', out of which a community kitchen and a general store were run. These institutions which had originated for religious and social purposes, and which had been in existence for the past many generations, were now made use of for a military purpose. The soldiers were fed from the community kitchen, and from the general store, clothes, arms and horses were supplied free to them. Most of these articles were brought in by the devotees themselves, while deficiencies were replenished by purchase out of the funds built out of the disciples' cash offerings. The Guru's missionaries known as *Masands*, scattered all over the country, were under special instructions to ask the Sikhs to send arms and horses as part of their offerings to the Guru. The absence of any restriction on the manufacture and trade of arms in the country in those days created conditions most favourable for the achievement of such a task, with the result that the Guru was in a short time in possession of an adequate supply of arms of all kinds, such as swords, daggers, bows, arrows, armour, maces and muskets, etc.—all popular weapons of the day. It was difficult to get big guns, as it involved a heavy expenditure. The Sikh army was so deficient in this particular arm that at the battle of Amritsar a gun had to be improvised out of the hollow stem of a fallen tree.

One of the novelties of the composition of the army raised by Guru Hargobind was that it included in its ranks men belonging to the lower classes of the society, whose status had been raised by the teachings of the Gurus. Thus the army came to be based on new social foundations and

further, became the instrument of a social revolution, one of the primary aims of the Sikh movement.

The vast majority of the army being Jats, use of weapons and knowledge of warfare were not altogether unfamiliar to the soldiers. But this was not enough, and much more training not only in the employment of weapons of war, but also in discipline and tactics was urgently required to adequately fit them for large-scale operations against trained and well-versed imperial troops. Hence training was made a regular feature of the daily routine. Every afternoon was spent in the performance of physical feats such as wrestling, jumping and weight-lifting, etc., which were meant to be strengthening and agility-giving exercises, in learning the use of weapons of war by way of sword-play, shooting of arrows and firing of muskets, in riding and using lances and spears from horse-backs and finally in acquiring efficiency in warfare by arranging sham fights. Often, the Guru himself acted as instructor, which had a great inspiring effect on the trainees. The excellent results of all this labour became manifest later on in the fights against the Mughals.

The morale of the troopers and other followers was raised by the Guru by taking them out on hunting expeditions, by arranging manly games and by holding symposia of martial music. The morning service was held as usual in the Harmandir where, besides holy hymns, certain divine odes, called *Vars*, which had been set to heroic tunes, were sung. Besides, the Guru frequently gave inspiring talks on the virtues of manliness, heroism and self-sacrifice and above all, on the unquestioning faith in God, the fountain of all heroism.

It is difficult to say anything definitely about the total strength of the army raised by Guru Hargobind. According to Mohsan Fani, the Guru had 800 horses in his stable, 300 troopers on horse back and 60 men with fire-arms. The authors of *A Short History of the Sikhs* put the figure at about 500 horses. Actually the number would have been much larger. The very fact that the Guru was able to defeat the Mughals every time, furnishes evidence of his solid strength. The figure of 1200 as Sikh losses in the battle of Lahra, 1631, also points to the same conclusion. But at the same time it may be remembered that the strength of the army could not be very large, as it had to be confined within the limitations of the Guru's resources which, in the very nature of the things, could not be large at that early stage. Then there is another point to be borne in mind. The army directly maintained by the Guru formed only a small proportion of the total man-power that could be mobilised in times of emergency. The entire Sikh population of Majha, Malwa and

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Doaba constituted, as it were, the reserve force of the Guru, which could be and was actually called into service whenever there was a necessity for this.

It was but natural that the military turn that the Sikh movement got under the pontificate of Guru Hargobind should give rise to some apprehensions in the official circles. Alarmed by the Guru's early measures such as building of the fort of Lohgarh and organising a band of troops, Emperor Jahangir arrested and held him captive in the fort of Gwalior. After some years, however, he felt so much impressed with the saintly personality of the Guru that he not only set him free, but also developed intimate relations with him. The Guru too, on his part, being conscious of his limited and deficient resources and realising the undesirability of any armed clash with the Government at the initial stages, preferred to build up his strength quietly and without arousing the suspicions of the powers that be. Even when Shah Jahan sat on the throne in 1627, the Guru was anxious to continue his peaceful policy. He had no political ambitions, nor did he have any mania for fighting. This is clear from the fact that he never in the course of his war with the Mughals led any expeditions against any body; rather expeditions were led against him by Government officials, thus compelling him to take up arms in sheer self-defence. A number of actions were fought and won by him, but none of them was the outcome of his own seeking. It was always his endeavour to avoid unnecessary clashes, which is evident from the way he conducted himself in the course of his war : from his leaving in 1628 for Jhabal and then for Sri Hargobindpur after the victory of Amritsar; from his departure in 1630 after the victory of Sri Hargobindpur towards the waste lands of Malwa; from his proceeding in 1631 after the victory of Malwa to Kartarpur; and from his final retirement in 1634 after the victory of Kartarpur to Kiratpur where he spent the remaining 10 years of his life. This shows that after every victory of his, he left for some other place, with a view to avoiding the possibility of further hostilities, of course without any slackening of his military preparations. After following this policy for six long years when he realised that even this would not bring the war to an end, he left for Kiratpur, a place situated out of the way, at the foot of the Shivalik Hills and having great natural strength on account of a thick jungle and hills around it. This brought the hostilities to a close and gave the Guru the much-coveted opportunity of quietly and uninterruptedly building the armed, moral and spiritual strength of his Sikhs. From now onward upto the end of his life, the Guru lived at this place and did his work peacefully. It

seemed, however, that he had not chosen this place with a view to making it a base of any future operations. He was aware of its limitations as a base, situated as it was away from his political base and wasted no money and time on throwing up any fortifications there.

From 1628 to 1634 were the peak years of Guru Hargobind's struggle with the Mughals. As many as four—battles were fought during this period—Amritsar (1628), Sri Hargobindpur (1620), Lahra (1631), and Kartarpur (1634). They were all in the nature of fights with local or provincial forces of the Government, and yet the unbroken chain of victories gained by the Guru in all of them speak highly of his qualities as an organiser and a military strategist. All the battles were fought from judiciously selected and carefully prepared positions. With the exception of Lahra, all had fortifications. Even Lahra was a very strong place. It was situated in the waste lands of Malwa where scarcity of water and abundance of sand rendered the approach of any enemy force extremely difficult. To further add to the difficulties of the Mughals who attacked him there in 1631, the Guru took up his position round the only tank of water available there. The enemy, overcome by all these obstacles and the tough fight offered by the Guru, sought his safety in retreat. This indicates that wherever a fortified position was not available, the Guru made a skilful use of terrain.

Organisation of intelligence is of as much importance in defensive as in offensive warfare. The Guru was fully alive to this and paid close attention to the problem. He had no regular intelligence department for this purpose, but he experienced no difficulty on that account, as the service was efficiently rendered by his Masands (missionaries) and other Sikhs who always kept him in touch about the movements of the enemy. This enabled him to take up his positions and make preparations in advance and meet the attack, when it came, with confidence and vigour.

Another cause of the Guru's triumphs was his invariable practice to leave the place of action immediately after gaining victory. This was a wise policy, because had he stuck to one place, the defeated enemy would have retaliated with larger numbers and his power would have been dealt a severe blow. However, the fact remains that as far as possible he never left his political base, which comprised of the Majha, Doaba and a certain portion of Malwa, for he was convinced that so long as he was operating within it, he could always rely on the ready and willing support of the Sikhs of these areas, in the matter of supplies in men and provisions. Being in the political base meant being in the midst of a friendly population which furnished the Guru with local militia and means of sustenance for his men and horses. This factor also solved for

him the problem of security.

Guru Hargobind's war had a very limited purpose and his military strategy has got to be looked at from that particular angle. It was a defensive strategy, pure and simple, and such being the case, there was no scope in it for any initiative, mobility, offensive or surprise. He never led any attacks, but only met them when made upon him. He had no military objective to maintain except creating in his people the will to resist high-handedness. He, therefore, did not mind leaving his military bases after the fights, because, in his opinion, it did not adversely affect the achievement of his real objective. He was also not very much concerned about his lines of communications, as his supplies were easily available from the country immediately around. His strategical manoeuvres were limited to selection of good sites of battle, concentration of maximum possible force at the point of attack and shifting of positions within the geographical limits of his political base. These manoeuvres were, however, used with skill and dexterity, with the result that all his battles ended in victories.

Guru Hargobind's object in fighting with the Mughals was not to overthrow the Mughal Government and substitute for it a government of his own or to wage a religious war aiming at the destruction of any religion. He had only the limited aim of compelling the attention of the authorities to the evils of their administration, of creating in his people the will to resist evil, and of making the armed preparedness of his followers the guarantee of a good government. To what extent was he successful in the achievement of this aim? By his bold stand and determined courage against heavy odds, the Guru not only saved Sikhism from annihilation, but also succeeded in arousing amongst his followers an uncompromising sense of resistance against tyranny and aggression. It was rather too much for him to arrest the progressive trend of the Imperial policy towards intoleration and misrule, but his efforts were thoroughly successful in so far as he endeavoured to awaken and organise his people against the evils of such a policy. Assessing his achievements, Mr. Banerjee has thus summed up his views: "The successes against innumerable odds could not but inspire the Sikhs with self-confidence and given them an exalted sense of their own worth. They had hitherto been kept under heels by the Musalmans, but now they learnt for the first time that under proper guidance and control they could meet the Musalmans on an equal footing or even gain the better. This consciousness of their own worth, arising out of their own trying experiences, became, as we see later on, a great national asset. Guru Hargobind demonstrated a possi-

bility—the possibility of the Sikhs openly assuming an attitude of defiance against the Mughal Government—and considerably prepared the way for the thorough reformation that they received in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh.”

## II

### **Guru Gobind Singh's Struggle with the Mughals with special reference to His Art of Warfare**

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675 at the altar of Emperor Aurangzeb's intolerant religious policy brought to a conclusion the period of uneasy peace marking the relations between the Sikh Gurus and the Mughal rulers ever since the demise of Guru Hargobind in 1644. It also ushered in a new critical phase in Sikh history, spreading over the whole pontification of Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh at his accession was confronted with an exceptionally difficult situation. The effect of the execution of his father had been so staggering that nobody from the high-class Sikhs had come forward to claim his dismembered body for the purpose of cremation and further that many of the Sikhs when asked as to whether they were Sikhs, had shown the infirmity to deny their very religion. This indicated that they were yet, in spite of the preceding Guru's unremitting labours to build up in them the will to resist tyranny, not strong enough and required to be further aroused to a full sense of the degradation to which foreign domination had reduced them, and re-inspired with ideas of combating oppression, wherever it might be found. But such a task was fraught with serious dangers, and was obviously impossible of accomplishment without a proper and fitting organisation to meet the challenge of the opposition likely to be stirred by any effective action on the part of the Guru. Fortunately, there were a few mitigating factors, such as the pre-occupation of Aurangzeb in a life and death struggle with the Marathas in the Deccan and the general disaffection of the people resulting from his substitution of an intolerant and provocative policy for the broad-minded and liberal policy of Akbar the Great.

Raising an armed force with a view to the inculcation of martial qualities was the first essential of a programme of reinvigoration adopted by Guru Gobind Singh. He started with a small force which, as time went on, owing to the exigencies of defence against the incessant intrigues and attacks of hill chiefs and the Mughal governors of Lahore and Sirhind, grew up into a powerful organisation. This army was modelled upon that of Guru Hargobind. Likewise, it was composed of volunteers who were also his votaries, drawn mostly from the Malwa tract of the Punjab.

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They drew no pay, and being religious zealots, were much superior to paid soldiers. They were fed from the community kitchen. Uniforms, arms and horses were provided out of the Guru's *Golak* (treasury). Supply of ration to the community kitchen sometimes created difficulties, because the hostile people of the neighbouring hilly areas would not give things even on payment, with the result that sometimes there were unseemly scuffles leading to forcible acquisition of goods by the Sikhs. The Guru who was opposed to all such methods always tried to hold his men in check, but even then occasionally, as in the case of Alsun, unfortunate incidents did come to pass.

As the Guru was a very busy man, having to attend to large numbers of visitors and several other matters, he entrusted Nand Chand, one of his followers, with the duty of looking after all these arrangements, who served in that position for several years, until he was denounced for his arrogance and misbehaviour. The system of supplies noticed above did not work to the satisfaction of the Guru, as the *Masands*, as collectors of the Sikhs' offerings, at times, misappropriate a large part of them. He, therefore, abolished the '*Masand System*' and asked the Sikhs to bring their offerings directly into the Guru's treasury. This not only increased his finances, but also strengthened the community by eliminating an important disintegrating factor.

Guru Gobind Singh had no love for mercenaries and like his grandfather avoided them as far as possible but at times when he felt an acute shortage of men, he did not hesitate to engage them on paid basis. For instance, he enlisted about 500 Pathans at Paonta Sahib and a few hundred of Malwa people a little before the battle of Muktsar, when he was being pursued by Wazir Khan's troops, but in both the cases, his experience was far from pleasant. The Pathans deserted him and joined the enemy on the eve of the battle of Bhangani in 1687 and the Malwa people pressed their demand of pay at a time when there was no money with the Guru, and when at last with some difficulty he managed to pay them, they left him immediately.

Guru Gobind Singh made military training an essential part of his daily routine. All arts like sword-play, aiming and firing of matchlocks and guns, archery, plying of spears, etc., were practised with diligence and devotion under the personal supervision of the Guru himself, a past-master in archery and fire arms. Tactics and field exercises constituted an important part of the instruction programme. Sham fights were frequently organised for this purpose. It is sometimes said that a special drill was invented by the Guru for his army, but no details are available to

confirm this view. Besides, all such manly games as were likely to be helpful in the development of physique and martial spirit, were encouraged. Every year on the occasion of *Hola Mohalla*, in the presence of a vast assemblage, competitions in various branches of military skill were held and all distinctions were rewarded.

It is difficult to give a definite estimate of the aggregate armed strength of the Guru, but taking into account the fact that he had to contend all his life against heavy odds, that he was able to defeat the hill chiefs always and the Mughals on some occasions and that being situated in hills among hostile people and far away from the plains he could not place that degree of reliance upon local militia which his grandfather could do, it may be reasonably presumed that he maintained a military force running into several thousands, much larger than Guru Hargobind's, but the maximum limit could not possibly be higher than what could be allowed by his limited resources which derived mainly from the offerings of his disciples. However, later on when he realised the inadequacy of his force for meeting the combined challenge of the hill *Rajas* and the Mughal *Subedars*, he by a dramatic device created the *Khalsa* in 1699 and militarised almost the whole community, thereby hardening the base of his military strength. The results of this master stroke were not so much in evidence in his time as they were after his death, when his Sikhs shook the very foundation of the Mughal empire and ultimately wrested political power from the hands of their adversaries.

Like his grandfather, Guru Gobind Singh attached the greatest possible importance to boosting the morale of his troops or followers, because he was convinced that without it success in the battlefield or outside was impossible. Dr G. C. Narang mentions the following means which he employed to achieve his object.

1. He inspired his men with the belief that they were now under the direct control and protection of God. They were taught to believe that God was always present in the general body of *Khalsa* and that wherever five Sikhs were present the *Guru* would be with them.
2. They were further impressed with the idea that they were born to conquer and the Mughal rule was sure to give way before them. The new salutation amongst the Sikhs, "*Wahiguru Jee ka Khalsa, Wahiguru Jee ki Fateh*," i.e., 'the Lord's is the *Khalsa*, Lord's be the victory; gave them a strong conviction of their being the chosen instruments of God and inspired them with confidence, which are the strongest guaranties of success.



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3. To raise their spirits still higher, the Guru changed their names from *Sikhs* into *Singhs*, thus making lions of humble disciples and "raising them with one stroke to a position of equality with the noblest and most warlike class in India," for up to that time only the Rajputs bore the exalted title of Singhs. They were now to feel as good and as great as the members of solar and lunar dynasties.
4. Literature was used to infuse a warlike spirit into their hearts. The Guru had a host of poets and pandits in his service and he caused many stirring stories in the epics and the *Puranas* to be translated into Hindi. He himself was a poet of no mean order and the language and the heroic style of his poetry, saturated with the spirit of the epics had electrifying effect on the mind. The men who had never touched a sword or shouldered a gun became heroes. Confectioners, washermen, sweepers and barbers became leaders of armies before whom the Rajas quailed and the Nawabs cowered with terror.
5. The Guru cherished the sword as an object of worship and some of his finest verses are dedicated to it. He exhorted his followers to stick to the worship of this great deliverer of mankind. He went to the extent of saying that God is all steel.
6. In addition, his war drum called *Dhaunsā*, manufactured in the earlier part of his career, served as a great spirit-booster.

The growing strength of Guru Gobind Singh besides his growing popularity and the progressive views he held and advocated on social and religious matters, aroused passions against him in the minds of the neighbouring hill chieftains as well as the Mughal ruler, and from this sprang a more or less life-long struggle with far-reaching consequences to the future course of our history. A brief strategical survey of this prolonged struggle of the Guru will be found in the following pages.

As a strategist, he took a far deeper view than his grandfather. He held grand strategy to be far more important than military strategy and in the former he laid greater emphasis on internal strength springing from the deeper fountains of human potentialities than on external strength based on political alliances. But this does not mean that he considered political alliances or military strategy as of no significance. As a matter of fact, his first object was to endeavour, in the words of Cunningham, "to mix himself up with the affairs of the half-independent hill chiefs, to obtain a commanding influence over them, so as by degree to establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastnesses to serve as the basis of his opera-

tions against the Mughal government. "But the hill chiefs were not willing to fall in line with him and indeed regarded him as a demagogue or an upstart. After the battle of Bhangani in 1687, however, they were in a mood of appreciating his strength and entered into a defensive alliance with him against the Imperial government. Combinedly they defeated the army of Alaf Khan, a Mughal general who had been sent by Miyan Khan of Jammu to realise by force the outstanding dues of tribute from the Rajas of the hills, and, for a time, it seemed that the Guru had attained his object and succeeded in building up a formidable resistance movement against the oppressive policies of the Mughals. But the alliance soon came to an end and thereafter the hilly princes returned to their old fold of allegiance to the Mughal government. The radical reforms introduced by the Guru in 1699, which struck at the root of caste prejudices, making the lowest equal to the highest, and the subsequent rapid rise in his power and influence, further annoyed the caste-ridden and idolatrous Rajput princes of the hills, widening the gulf still more. These princes now allied themselves with the Mughals. This alliance proved too strong for the comparatively slender resources of the Guru and ultimately resulted in his forced departure first from Anandpur and then from Chamkaur. These hardships were no doubt severe, but they could not demoralise the Guru who, after a good deal of wanderings, was rejoined by his followers and in 1705 at Khidrana was able to inflict a defeat upon the pursuing Mughal army of Wazir Khan. In the meantime, he had received a message from Emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan, asking him to come and see him. Encouraged by this, he wrote a long letter in Persian verse, known as *Zafarnama*, bringing to the notice of the Emperor the atrocities committed by his officials upon the innocent people of the Punjab and fearlessly charging him with perjury. This strongly worded letter is supposed to have moved the Emperor who repeated his wish that the Guru should see him. It was under these circumstances that a new line of policy, settlement through negotiations, was adopted and the Guru started southward. It is clear from the tone and contents of the *Zafarnama* that this reorientation of strategy was not the outcome of any sense of frustration caused by the hardships lately suffered by the Guru. Moreover, the tradition has it that the first move in this direction was made by the Emperor. Even in the absence of the veracity of this tradition when his strong protest against the perjury of his officials brought from the Emperor an invitation for personal talks, the Guru thought it prudent to make a favourable response. The new line of approach failed to yield the desired dividends.

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But the Guru did not measure his efforts by the yard-stick of immediate success. His mind was ever set on the fundamentals of human character, on welding his scattered followers into a well-knit and powerful organisation, on giving them an ideal, and on raising a whole nation in arms against tyranny and oppression, so rife in the land. His masterly stroke of 1699, creating the brave Khalsa, released an unbounded fund of human energy, which signified a far greater achievement than any military victory he won or might have won. "It must not be forgotten," writes Banerjee, "that in the latter instance, a nation was up in arms against its enemies and it is the collective efforts of the masses rather than individual achievements that ultimately made the revolution a success."

The military strategy of Guru Gobind Singh was, like that of his grandfather, basically of a defensive character. He had no political ambitions of any kind, although some writers like Cunningham have mistakenly attributed such motives to him. What he aimed at, all along, was to build up a strong movement of armed resistance which might accept the Mughal rule all right, but not the tyranny and oppression associated with it. Further, he was perfectly aware that in military strength he was no match for the vast resources of the Empire and that offensive would prove fatal to his ultimate purpose. Therefore, his constant endeavour was not to take the initiative and to avoid clash of arms as far as possible. His entire career illustrates this. His leaving Anandpur for Paonta Sahib in the state of Nahan was motivated by his desire to be away from a place where Bhim Chand was trying to provoke hostilities with him. The battle of Bhangani which took place in 1687 between him and the hilly Rajas, was not of his seeking, but was forced upon him by Fateh Shah, the ruler of Garhwal. The Guru won a complete victory at this battle but he immediately left Paonta for Anandpur with a view to avoiding any further fighting. His alliance with the Hill Chiefs and his participation in the battle of Nadaun against the Mughal invader, Alaf Khan, was purely a measure of joint self-defence against a common enemy. After that, many a battle was fought between him and the Hill Chiefs or between him and the Hill Chiefs in alliance with the Mughals, but invariably the first attacks came from others, there being not a single instance in which he took the initiative. He was so clear and firm in his policy that even victories failed to deflect him from the path he had set for himself.

But though he did not want to fight, he could ill afford to be complacent. He knew fully well that the Rajput princes who had greatly resented his religious and social reforms and the increase in his military power and the Mughal Government who looked upon him as a great potential

political danger, would let go no suitable opportunity to crush him. Hence, he had to be ever vigilant and ever prepared for war. The first essential for this is up-to-date information about the enemy and his movements. This was secured through the help of spies. In the event of actual outbreak of war, scouts were made use of. The second essential is strong fortifications to house treasury and other sinews of war and to provide for effective defence against the attacks of an enemy too strong to be countered in the open. Therefore he built a small fort at Paonta with the aid of the Raja of Nahan. But he did not stay there for long. After his return to Anandpur, he built as many as four forts at that place, namely *Loh Garh*, *Anand Garh*, *Kes Garh* and *Fateh Garh*. These were built either on eminences or on the bank of a brooklet, the Charan Ganga, with adequate provision for watch towers and mounting of guns, with loop holes for muskets and embrasures for cannon, and with further arrangements for water supply and inter-communication between the various forts.

The Guru also showed a remarkable awareness of the strategic importance of being near the base. His military base was Anandpur, whereas his political base was made of Malwa, Majha and Doaba tracts of the Punjab, where lived the majority of the Sikhs. He always saw to it that uninterrupted communication should continue to exist between the two bases, because he was convinced that the latter being the very root of his strength, was the very condition of the existence of the former. In the beginning, he seems to be somewhat vague on this important point. This may be evident from his shifting over to Paonta and constructing his first fort there. But he soon realised that it was not a fit base, far removed as it was from his political base. So he returned to Anandpur. This place, situated away from the main road by which Mughal armies generally marched between Delhi and the North West frontier, was yet not very distant from his tap-root and hence was fully qualified to serve as a military base. Hence he built up the place into a powerful stronghold and met the principal attacks of his adversaries there. He was so much convinced of the soundness of his position that even when the rigours of the second siege of Anandpur had reduced the Sikhs to great straits, he would not listen to any advice suggesting evacuation of the place, until finally he was compelled to do so by his own followers. After the abandonment of Anandpur, his march towards Malwa was a highly strategic move, in so far as it led him into the very heart of his political base. His hopes were fully justified, because he soon got together a force of sufficient strength with which he was able to defeat the Mughal troops pursuing him. Moreover, the country being sandy and waterless for

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several miles around, he could not be easily approached and dislodged, with the result that he was thereafter left to himself by the enemy.

The Guru was fully conscious of the importance of mobility in war. Once he was convinced that the enemy was coming for attack, he made every possible haste to move his troops and to occupy some vantage point. A striking example of this is provided by the battle of Bhangani. After making sure as to which way the hill chiefs were advancing, he had marched his little army at full speed to a mound, six miles away from Paonta and had taken position on it before the enemy reached that place. A similar sense of mobility and selection of position was displayed by him both at Chamkaur and Khidrana.

Negotiations with the enemy are an essential part of strategy. Being a man of high moral scruples, he used this instrument not for the outwitting of the enemy, but for an honourable settlement with him, if possible. However, the enemy might not have the same regard for scruples, which fact made him extremely cautious in his dealings with him. When the second siege of Anandpur was on, several sacred pledges were made by the hill chiefs and the Mughals that he would be done no harm, if he chose to evacuate the fort. Many of his people were ready to believe these promises and urgently pressed the Guru to accept them. But he placed no reliance on them and in order to demonstrate their hollowness sent a party of some bullocks laden apparently with valuables but really with old shoes, torn-out clothes beautifully covered, which was immediately attacked by the besiegers in utter disregard of their plighted words.

Pursuit of a defeated enemy is considered an important principle of military strategy but the Guru, like typical Rajputs and his grandfather, did not pay much heed to it. For instance, when his men pursued the Mughal army of Din Beg, he recalled them saying that it did not become Sikhs to pursue a cowardly and fugitive enemy.

We may now compare Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Hargobind in the matter of strategy. There was a basic similarity in their approach towards this problem and their differences were of detail rather than of principle. However, there was one important difference which needs a special mention here. Guru Hargobind fought all his battles within the four corners of his political base and was able to secure all the advantages that such a line of policy can possibly confer, whereas on the other hand, Guru Gobind Singh was at one end of his political base, almost in the midst of hostile population. His position, no doubt, had the advantage of a good cover provided by hills and groves of trees around Anandpur, but he could not, unlike his grandfather, mobilise in emergencies any

local militia to help him against his assailants. That is perhaps the reason which largely explains the unbroken series of successes gained by Guru Hargobind and the not-so-happy situation of Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur. The soundness of this view is established when it is remembered that when he fought an action later on at Khidrana, a place within his political base, he won such a decisive victory that the enemy dared not harass him any more.

A few words about the tactics of Guru Gobind Singh will not be out of place here. Broadly speaking, the tactics of Guru Gobind Singh were similar to those of his predecessor, Guru Hargobind. The basic factors in both the cases were the same : predominance of cavalry and nature of weapons. Similarity is also traceable in their disposition of troops, in the division of the combatants into attack and reserve parties, in their starting of battles with firing of guns and shooting of arrows from a distance, in their making charges and counter-charges, in their making special targets of opposing commanders, in their resorting to volleys of arrows and bullets to produce deadliest effect on the enemy, in their use of drums, trumpets, war-cries, challenges and many other things.

However, on account of the peculiarity of his circumstances, Guru Gobind Singh had to use some tactics which might not be unknown to his illustrious predecessor but which were not applied by him as he never faced a similar situation. During his later years, when Guru Gobind Singh was besieged at Anandpur for a long time by the overwhelming numbers of the Allies (Rajputs and Mughals), he was forced to use some tactics peculiar to his position. He continually harassed the besiegers by sallies, made by day as well as by night, on their men and ration depots and by firing guns through the embrasures of the fort. Nevertheless, the regior of the prolonged siege proved too much for his men and it was ultimately decided to abandon the place. The best example of his siege tactics is, however, afforded by the battle of Chamkaur. He had only 40 men to fight against an enemy several thousands strong. So he took up his position within a small mud fort and posted eight of his soldiers to guard each wall, two at the gate and two to keep watch and go round giving directions. He himself with two Sikhs held the top storey. The enemy made repeated attempts to storm the gates of the fortress. The Guru sent out his doughty warriors in small batches of five each, himself giving a cover of arrow-shots from the top storey, fast enough to create the impression that the garrison was not so thin as the Mughals thought. By this technique, he was able to keep the enemy at bay for the whole span of one day and one night, so that he got time to disappear into the darkness

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of the night, which was, of course, done against his own will and under persistent pressure from his followers. Another interesting example of the Guru's tactics is provided by the battle of Khidrana where the numerical inferiority of the Sikhs persuaded them to cover the trees in the neighbourhood with clothes, so that the enemy might be misled to think that they were encamped in great numbers and that it would not be easy to defeat them—a tactic which was intensively employed by the Sikhs in the later period of their history. While commenting on the tactics of Guru Gobind Singh, Banerjee writes : "The defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur where, as tradition affirms, the Guru with only 40 chosen companions, kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops, has hardly a parallel and the keen and discerning eye with which he chose the spot where the battle of Khidrana was fought and the army of Wazir Khan was compelled to retire leaves us in no doubt as to his tactical genius "

Another point worth mentioning is the continuance of the tradition of the ancient Hindu ethics of war in the fights of Guru Gobind Singh. Similar regard for the dead and the wounded of the enemy and similar reluctance to strike anyone first or to pursue or kill a defeated or defenceless enemy are discernible in all his military activities.

Our account of Guru Gobind Singh's mode of warfare will be incomplete without a glance on his achievements. To a superficial observer, he was, both politically and militarily, a failure, but a deeper study of his career and work will reveal that he was a great success. His object was not to overthrow the Mughal government and to build up a *Khalsa Raj* on its ruins, but to further develop his grandfather's movement of armed resistance against the tyranny and oppression of the Mughal administration. For that purpose, he created, by methods which only a genius could comprehend, a compact brotherhood which was also to be a brotherhood in arms. By inculcating the worship of the sword as "their principal stay in this world," and by making its keeping obligatory for all, he converted, as if by magic, all his followers into heroes and warriors who were required to sacrifice their all for the Guru, for the community and for the cause of righteousness. The Guru had given them a distinct individuality, a distinct ideology and a distinct unity through hardships suffered together as well as by a long-drawn-out struggle in the same noble cause. They were to take up the work of their master where he left it and to carry it on until its logical end was reached. It was these saint-soldiers, as they were intended to be, who swept over the Punjab under Banda Singh and who, later on, after the vicissitudes of half a

century, wrested political power from the Mughals and the Afghans. Unlike the soldiers of other Hindu armies, these saint-soldiers were not men of high castes who, being caste-ridden, were opposed to his social and religious reforms, but of low castes, hitherto deemed the dregs of the society. "Prior to the time of the Sikh Gurus", says Banerjee, "no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men who were believed to be unclean and polluted from their birth. "Still another achievement of the Guru was that his constant employment of the Sikhs in wars had made them much more expert in the use of arms and the art of war.

### III

#### **Banda Singh takes up the challenge**

The third critical phase in Sikh history, which was only a sequel of the second one discussed earlier opens with the arrival of Banda Singh in the Punjab in 1709, after his investiture as the leader of the Khalsa by the Master at Nander and continues till his execution at Delhi in 1716. This period of 7 years, marked by ceaseless fighting against the Mughal imperialists and the meteoric rise and fall of Banda Singh, witnessed the first Sikh attempt, though unsuccessful, to carve out an independent state.

Banda Singh mapped out a course of action different from that of the Gurus Hargobind and Gobind Singh. His object was no less than destruction of the Mughal empire and foundation of an independent '*raj*'. Efforts had been made by the Gurus to reform the Mughals, but they had only served to harden their attitude, to make them all the more arrogant and oppressive. Banda Singh proceeded on the assumption that nothing short of a revolution would serve the purpose.

His overall plan of action (grand strategy) was shrewdly conceived. He espoused the cause of the oppressed, the weak and the downtrodden and by declaring a general war on all oppressors of the people, and by attending in right earnest to the complaints of the aggrieved, he let them understand that he was their liberator commissioned by providence to release them from their centuries-old servitude. Moreover, his general promise at the very outset of his campaigns to distribute the conquered lands among those who would fight for him, and his land reforms after the conquest of Sirhind, conferring proprietorship upon petty cultivators in place of *Zamindars* and *Chaudharis*, popularised his cause and made him the rallying point of the poor agricultural classes, thereby broadening the base of his struggle. As a result of this, he was able to mobilise a huge mass of people for the execution of his grandiose plans.

But mere numbers were not enough. A bold and positive plan of



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fighting (military strategy) was most necessary, if the political object was to be achieved. The defensive strategy of the Gurus' period was no longer adequate. Banda Singh, like a shrewd general, started with a strong offensive and it was as its result that in the short space of a little more than a year, he became the master of almost the whole of Sirhind Division, Bist-Jullundur Doab, districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur and a few *par-ganas* of Saharanpur Division. The arrival of Emperor Bahadur Shah with an overwhelming force in the Punjab in October 1710, however, put him on the defensive. Here too, notwithstanding a few mistakes committed in the initial stages of his defence both at Sadhaura and Lohgarh he acted in a skilful manner though in the end realising the hopelessness of his situation, he preferred to seek safety in fighting his way through the ranks of the enemy and taking shelter in the hills nearby. After this, he made use of offensive and defensive both as his circumstances demanded. Soon after his flight from Lohgarh, he took an offensive against the chiefs of Kohistan and having subdued them either by force or persuasion made their country into a base for his further operations. From here he conducted several successful and unsuccessful incursions into the plains, which offered instances of both offensive and defensive modes of warfare. Particularly noteworthy of his offensives were the conquests of Behrampur, Batala and Kalanaur in 1711, of Sadhaura and Lohgarh in 1712 and of Batala and Kalanaur again in 1715, while the most prominent of his defences were those of Lohgarh in 1713 and of Gurdas-nangal in 1715. Regarding his defences it may be said that generally he fought from within forts or fortresses, but in emergencies when no fortification was available, he dug in and improvised defensive works, as for example at Gurdas-nangal.

Military strategy without careful planning is like a blind alley. Ultimate success to a large extent depends upon sound planning. The way in which Banda Singh planned his operations, speaks highly of his genius. When he launched his first campaign (i.e., against Sirhind), he had little money and little army with him. But he worked in such a manner that by the time he approached his target, there was no shortage of resources. He wrote urgent letters to Malwa, Doaba and Majha Sikhs to hasten to him to participate in the Holy War. In the meantime he decided to embark upon small expeditions against the notorious officials, *Chaudhris* and feudal chiefs. These petty expeditions brought him money, arms, horses and above all reputation—things which were so essential for success in the major campaign against Sirhind. Moreover, Sikhs of the interior parts of the Punjab had been enabled thereby to join and swell his ranks. The

conquest of Sirhind, then, was not a very difficult affair.

After the conquest of Sirhind, Banda Singh shifted to Mukhlaspur, already conquered, which he now selected as his capital under the name of Lohgarh. Situated on the top of a hill, among the steep slopes of the Himalayas, approached only by craggy rocks and rivulets, and with the friendly state of Nahan in the rear, it was an exceedingly strong place and his choice of it is indicative of the strategic eye that he possessed. This selection also gives us a peep into his political designs after Sirhind. The location of the capital seems to have been determined not only by the strength of the place, of which there is no doubt, but also by his desire to consolidate the conquests made hitherto.<sup>1</sup>

Decision of the capital made, there were now two courses open to Banda Singh : (i) to cross into the Doaba and the Majha tracts of the Punjab and to liberate them from the domination of Muslims; (ii) to cross into the Gangetic Doab. As such in the way of the first course, there was a formidable difficulty, that of crossing the Satluj. The Sikhs from beyond the line of this river, while coming to join Banda in the battle of Sirhind, had experienced great trouble in this connection at the hands of local Muslim officials. It was, therefore, feared that these people might again cause trouble. Moreover, there was the more urgent problem of providing for the security of his capital. But the idea of a forward march too could not be abandoned altogether, it being an essential part of his larger plan. Hence it was decided to send small parties across the Satluj to rouse the Sikhs over there against the local authorities and to prepare the ground for his powerful intervention later on. Having done this, he thought of the second course. This was essential for the security of his capital, Lohgarh. The maltreatment meted out by the Sayads of Jallalabad to a few fresh converts to Sikhism, of the village Unarsa, was an unequivocal sign of the hostile designs of the Muslims of the Gangetic Doab. Under such circumstances, had he left his capital and marched upon Jullundur and Amritsar immediately, he would have certainly lost his capital with all the stores collected in it. Moreover, no time was to be lost as the excellent opportunity presented by Emperor Bahadur

1. The view held by some people, that he really wanted to capture Delhi in the absence of the Emperor, is far-fetched and untenable. Did he possess the requisite battering cannon to storm the fortifications of Delhi? Was the route with the Jamuna to be crossed twice the best one for the conquest of Delhi? Was not the Panipat-Karnal route much better for the purpose? Perhaps the correct explanation may be that the Gangetic campaign was in the nature of a security or consolidation measure.

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Shah's absence from the North, might be no longer available, if and when he returned from the Deccan. Consequently, this second course was preferred. A systematic campaign was organised which ended in the conquests of Saharanpur, Behut, Ambeta, Nanauta, Karnal and Panipat. However, it is difficult to agree with Malcolm's view that "if Bahadur Shah had not quitted the Deccan which he did in 1710, there is every reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these invaders," because it would amount to saying that the conquest of Hindostan (i.e., modern U.P.) was considered by Banda more important than the emancipation of his homeland, the Punjab, from the oppressive rule of the Mughals. In the meantime, astounding successes had been achieved by the Sikhs of the Doaba and the Majha, who had been worked up by his emissaries. For a time, Banda Singh seemed to be at the summit of his power. But all these early successes were rendered infructuous by the arrival of Bahadur Shah from the South earlier than expected.

Banda Singh's resourcefulness and fertility of brain are again revealed when the mighty army of the Emperor dislodged him from his capital, Lohgarh, and drove him into the Shivalik Hills. Not discomfited at this severe set-back, he rallied his men within a short time and brought the hilly rulers under his influence. Thereafter, Kohistan, as the hilly areas were called, was made into a military base from where he carried on irregular but well-planned inroads into the plains. In about three months' time from the date of fall of Lohgarh, the Sikh chief issued from the vicinity of Raipur and Behrampur and extended his political sway towards Gurdaspur. After the first victories he had even the desire to advance upon Lahore, which, however, could not be fulfilled because of the Imperial generals having already reached there. About seven months later when Bahadur Shah died in February 1712, and when a war of succession started among his sons, he immediately took advantage of the confusion thus created and rushed, at the other end of the hills, upon Lohgarh and Sadhaura. He not only recaptured them without any difficulty but also was able to retain them, almost in a state of siege, for nearly two long years. Ultimately, however, the superior army of the new Emperor Farrukh Siyar dislodged him from there and compelled him to fly back into the Shivalik Hills, from where, after watching the political situation for some time and maturing his plans, he pounced upon Batala and Kalanaur and gained some brilliant victories. But here too the imperial forces were soon upon him, with the result that he had to take a defensive position at Gurdasnangal. This was his last but

not the least gallant performance. After a prolonged siege of eight months, which was indeed a miracle, considering the improvised nature of his defensive works and the shortage of arms and food, he was captured alive along with a few hundreds of his followers.

Offensive and planning were not the only characteristics of Banda Singh's military strategy. Its other important features were surprise, mobility, concentration, economy of force and security. His movements were like a storm and their very swiftness constituted the major element of surprise. It was not, however, the surprise in the strictest military sense, as the attacks were invariably preceded by warnings. The best examples of concentration and economy of force are provided by the battle of Sirhind and the campaign of the Gangetic Doab. To produce the effect of concentration, he made a long detour from Samana towards Mukhlaspur to enable his forces encamped at Kiratpur to join him before the actual attack on Sirhind was delivered. As regards economy of force, he detailed the minimum possible troops for the defence of his capital and for rousing the people of the Doab and Majha territories, reserving the maximum strength for the immediate and major task of vanquishing Saharanpur and the areas around. As for security, he was alive to its importance from the very start. It was for reasons of security that immediately after the conquest of Sirhind, he hastened to select as his residence and seat of government such a strong place as Mukhlaspur. Again, the Gangetic campaign was chiefly inspired by his desire to secure it against any Muslim danger from that side. His selection of Kohistan as a military base for operations in the plains was similarly conceived. Equal anxiety was displayed for the security of his lines of retreat. But for this, he would not have been able to go back to his bases when his position was made desperate by the enemy. The security of the lines of communication was, however, not much of a problem with him as he did not have any convoys of supplies coming to him from his base, relying as he always did for his supplies on the country through which he marched his troops. Moreover, Banda Singh always displayed great vigilance in the matter of intelligence. Whereas, on the one hand, he spared no pains and measures to keep himself informed of the enemy's designs and movements through his spies, on the other hand he was ever on guard against the enemy's spies. At Samana he actually captured Wazir Khan (Subedar of Sirhind)'s spies, but as he did not want to keep his designs secret, he sent them back with a challenge to their master.

The tactical manoeuvres of Banda Singh Bahadur, like his strategy, were also based on speed and mobility. What he lacked in sinews of war,

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he tried to make up by swift movements. Not unoften, his adversaries were struck down by his dashing charges even before they were aware of the danger facing them.

And yet, in spite of his being a competent strategist and a shrewd tactician, Banda Singh proved unsuccessful in his bid against the Imperial government. The fact is that his failure was not due to any flaw in his generalship, but to other factors such as shortage of resources, superiority of the Mughals in manpower and war material, defective army organisation and the gradual alienation of upper classes from his cause.

One of his greatest handicaps was the shortage of arms, horses and manpower. He had a few guns only and even they were not always present with him. Hundreds of his men had to go without horses; and their fight was against an enemy who was far stronger in numbers, artillery, horses, weapons and equipment of war. Writes Kanwar, the author of *Tazkirah* : "The list of arms taken and money seized from Gurdasnangal does not give a very exalted notion of either the military strength or of the wealth of the Sikh leader in the fortress of Gurdasnangal, and it is really astonishing that with so scanty resources the Sikhs so determinedly resisted the greatest empire of the day for such a long time." What is true of Gurdasnangal is generally true of almost all the campaigns of Banda Singh. Moreover, the Empire, though well on the way to decline, was still deeply rooted in the soil. Banda Singh's task was, in the nature of things, far beyond his resources, limited as they were. And then unfortunately for him, a strong man like Abdus Samad Khan was at the helm of affairs in the Punjab. Another source of weakness for him was the presence, in large numbers, of dacoits and marauders in his army. These people were primarily interested in loot and plunder and were not prepared to stand by him through all the varying fortunes of war. Banda Singh had no funds to enlist a substantial strength of paid soldiers and consequently had to depend upon men whose bonafides were never above suspicion. The hard core of his army was composed of devoted Sikhs who had joined him as volunteers from different parts of the Punjab. They were at one with him in the political objectives of the rebellion against the Government and were ever ready to make sacrifices for the cause. But the number of such people, though not meagre, was no fair match for the far vaster hordes of the enemy. As for the aggregate strength of Banda Singh's army, it was not (according to Karam Singh, a biographer of Banda Singh) even as much as a Mughal Faujdar could mobilise, except in the earlier years when the exaggerated estimate of Khafi Khan puts it at forty thousands.

Banda Singh's problems were rendered doubly difficult by a change

in the attitude of the upper classes of the Punjab. These people had given him a great ovation on his entering the province and had extended to him with fervour and zeal all possible help in his first military actions. But gradually the fear of the Government reprisals struck awe in their minds, so that they held aloof from his activities for the rest of his career. What is still worse, many of the ruling chiefs like Chattursal, Badan Singh and Udet Singh Bundhelas, Churaman Jat, Gopal Singh Bhadauria, Bachan Singh Kachhwaha and the Rajas of Shivalak Hills took active part against him.

It is sometimes suggested (not very correctly) that Banda Singh's own excesses were largely responsible for shift in the attitude of the well-to-do classes residing in the arena of his activities. Some Muslim writers have painted him as a heartless tyrant. Of course, it may be said that he departed from some of the canons of warfare which characterised the wars of both Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh. The Gurus were spiritual leaders, so very particular about observing moral standards even in war. Moreover, they could easily afford to do so, as their wars were of a defensive character, without any political objective attached to them. But Banda's object was nothing short of establishment of a Sikh State, which required military operations on a much larger scale. He looked upon the delicate scruples of war as being incompatible with the attainment of his object and as a source of weakness in fighting. His strategy did not admit of such limitations which served only to place the enemy at an advantage. Therefore, he felt little hesitation in inflicting ruin and destruction upon the enemy and his country. But this does not mean that he was a heartless tyrant. The excesses associated with his name have been greatly exaggerated by Muslim chroniclers who could not rise above their communal prejudices (Thornton). Secondly, the excesses, if any, were generally committed by such people in his ranks as had joined him under temptations of plunder or taking revenge on their oppressors, and their number being large, it was not possible to keep them always in check. Moreover, it is to be remembered that such activities as loot, arson and murder, if at all, were resorted to by the Sikhs, by and large, only as part of the fighting tactics, to terrorise the enemy, as also his supporters and sympathisers who refused to offer submission. The places as well as persons offering submission readily were spared, as for example Malerkotla. There are no cases of wholesale indiscriminate pillage except when the fighting was inside a town where incendiarism had to be used to subdue the people positioned inside their houses. Moreover, how could a man whose fundamental policy was to win over to his cause the support and sympathy of the

#### SOME CRITICAL PERIODS OF SIKH HISTORY

people indulge in indiscriminate loot and murder ? Besides, even if there were certain excesses on some occasions, they were called for and were in no way more drastic than those generally associated with the warfare of those days. The Government troops, when dealing with refractories, behaved much worse and Nawab Zakaria Khan's decapitation of numerous innocent people while on his way to Delhi, is only one of the countless such instances. Then, there is another thing to be remembered. Like the Gurus before him, Banda Singh showed scrupulous regard for the protection of women, children and other harmless people. There is nothing on record to show any wantonness or barbarism on the part of Banda Singh and his men in regard to these categories of people.

Perhaps it will not be far wrong to say that Panda Singh Bahadur's bid for carving out an independent state, not far away from the capital of the Imperial authorities, was rather premature and bound to fail as it did. He had burst upon the Punjab with the abruptness and ferocity of a storm and had, for a few years, given a rude shaking to the rulers as well as the ruled. All his manoeuvres were brilliantly conceived and executed and his temporary successes were dazzling, but in the end, the entire edifice raised by him fell down like a house of cards. The reason, perhaps, besides the relative inferiority of Sikh resources is that little preparatory work had been done to tie up carefully all the threads of organisation. The foundation being weak, the superstructure erected by Banda Singh could not be expected to endure. Nevertheless, the efforts of this great man were not altogether in vain. The authors of *'A Short History of the Sikhs'* have well summed up his legacy :

"But all the successes gained by him were not on the battlefield. There was a revolution, effected in the minds of the people, of which history often fails to take note. A will was created in the ordinary masses to resist tyranny, to live and die for a national cause. The example set by Banda and his companions in this respect was to serve them as beacon light in the darker days to come. The idea of a national state, long dead, once again became a living aspiration and although suppressed for the time being by relentless persecution, it went on working under ground like a smouldering fire and came out forty years later with a fuller effulgence, never to be suppressed again."

## Book Reviews

*History of History-Writing in Medieval India : Contemporary Historians:* by Dr Jagadish Narayan Sarkar. Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1977, pp. 195, price Rs. 50/- .

This work, though 'An Introduction to Medieval Indian Historiography,' is a welcome addition to the literature on the subject and will prove greatly useful not only to present and prospective research scholars in the history of Medieval India but also to the teachers of the subject in colleges and universities. It has kept in view the needs of both of them and is sure to stimulate their interest in the study of this period in a more analytical way, keeping in view the personal bias, and group prejudices of the contemporary works. The first, three chapters, of the book are devoted to (i) Hindu historiography with reference to Kalhana, Rajput bardic literature, Assamese *Buranjis*, Marathi *Bakhars*, Sikh *Sakhis* and *Gurbilas* literature, (ii) Muslim historiography and (iii) Medieval Indo-Muslim historiography. The ideals, methodology and achievements of Indo-Muslim historiographers have been dealt with at length in the fifth chapter. In the conclusion (chapter VI) are dealt with the problems of historical objectivity, which, though difficult to attain, is a must for researchers and historians.

Dr Jagadish Narayan Sarkar deserves our thanks for the great service he has done, through this scholarly work, to the workers in the field of history of medieval India in particular and of ancient and modern India in general. The selected Bibliography given under different sections like Hindu Historiography, Muslim History outside India, Period of Arabs and Turko-Afghans, Mughal Period, Catalogues and Reference Books, Historiography in general and Modern Works, speaks volumes for the vast study and deep learning of Dr Sarkar that has gone into the writing of this book.

Dr J.N. Sarkar has promised to bring out in the near future a second companion volume on 'History of History-Writing on Medieval India' analysing therein the trends of the modern historians thereon. It is expected to deal with the growth of Indian historiography both, political and biographical its non-political, social and economic aspects, offering suggestions for filling up gaps. We wish it God speed.

GANDA SINGH



#### BOOK REVIEWS

*History of Sikh Gurus* by Dr Hari Ram Gupta, Pub. U.C.Kapur and sons, New Delhi, 1973, pp.i-xiv + 320, price, Library edition Rs.25.

Dr Hari Ram Gupta's *History of Sikh Gurus* is a surprise attempt outside the area of his specialization. It deals with the life accounts and achievements of the ten Sikh Masters.

It is really very difficult to write the history of a period where we lack reliable sources of information. The period of the Punjab history that was sanctified by the remarkable contributions to various fields by the Sikh Gurus suffers from the paucity of fully dependable source material. Despite the fact that dealing with the accounts of the Sikh Gurus historically is a difficult and delicate matter, much has been done in this regard during the recent years. Many new things have been discovered and consequently many old and traditional view points have been set aside. For bringing forth new facts and looking at events from new angles, sometimes the scholars have to pay a dear price. But if research has to be a living pursuit and it has to enrich the historical literature and to continue a quest for truth the conclusions arrived at by the research scholars have to be read with a kindly eye and considered with an open mind. And if in the light of the new research some old and one-sided views cannot stand the test of scientific historical scrutiny we should have the flexibility of accepting the new conclusions.

Here is a book written by a renowned scholar of the Sikh History of the eighteenth century. To my dismay the results of the researches made in the history of the Sikh Gurus during the last three or four decades have not been taken into consideration by the author intentionally or unintentionally. Let me innocently believe that if this author has done so intentionally then he belongs to old school of thought that is immune to research and if unintentionally, he has not kept himself abreast of the researches made in the Sikh history that we expect of a seasoned researcher.

Here I beg to take up only a few instances from this book to make an assessment of this work.

Dr Hari Ram Gupta is of the view that Guru Arjan converted voluntary offerings into compulsory contributions (p. 90). Regarding offerings there could never be any compulsion. The author of *Dabistan* has used the word *bhent* which means voluntary offerings.

Writing about the Masands the learned author says that they 'kept the Sikhs under a regular administrative system (p. 90). The Masands had no regular administrative system to be enforced on the Sikhs. This they simply could not do. There was a regular Mughal Government very successfully functioning in the Punjab as elsewhere. How could the Mug-

hals allow a parallel government or an independent administrative system of the Sikhs to function ? Emperor Jahangir who has made a statement in his *Tuzuk* regarding the Guru's conduct does not level any charge of Guru's having introduced among the Sikhs any administrative system.

The author writes that 'Guru Arjan began to live in an aristocratic and princely style (p.92). This is a fantastic observation about the most modest living of a person who was known for his austerity, and humility.

The author further writes "the Sikhs became good horsemen and formed the nucleus of the Guru's military power. The Sikh community acquired the position of a separate state within the Mughal State" (p.93). This observation needs no comment on the simple plea that neither it is borne out by Government records nor it was in tune with Guru Arjan's programmes which were solely directed towards the progress of the Sikhs as a religious group or community and not as a political power. Attributing political motive to Guru Arjan is an awfully unhistorical approach. It betrays utter lack of understanding of the Guru's mission.

Chandu Shah is said to have been holding an important post in the finance ministry at Delhi (p.99). In fact, he was a petty official of the revenue departments at Lahore.

The learned author arranges a dialogue between Jahangir and Guru Arjan regarding the latter's rendering help to the rebel prince Khusrau. But it is a matter of history that the two—the Guru and the Emperor—never met. After ordering the Guru's arrest and then his murder through torture, the Emperor left Lahore.

The author is harping upon the long since rejected theory of fine having been imposed on the Guru. The *Tuzuk* is unambiguously clear on this point to prove that no fine was imposed on the Guru.

The author writes that the Guru was ordered to be sewn in the raw hide of a cow. The Guru shuddered at the sight of the hide and asked permission to bathe in the Ravi. It is a pity that despite the fact that so much has already been written about it and Dr Ganda Singh has clinched the issue once for all, the author of this book is refusing to benefit from the labours of others. The author is creating confusion in respect of the matters so thoroughly probed and conclusively decided. The Guru was neither proposed to be sewn in the raw hide of a cow nor had he asked to be taken to the river for bath. The Guru had been 'tied up and thrown in the river.' This fact has been corroborated by the earlier writers like Kesar Singh Chhiber, Sohan Lal Suri and Rattan Singh Bhangu.

The author says that Guru Arjan's was a political murder and not

#### BOOK REVIEWS

a religious one. It is not proposed here to waste any space or arguments against the author's wrong observation in spite of so clear a verdict of the Emperor who wrote that he had been thinking for a long time that either the Guru be brought into the fold of Islam or the 'shop' of the Sikh Gurus be closed and thus the progress of Sikhism arrested. When the Emperor was in search of an opportunity to liquidate the spiritual leader of the Sikh community the opportunity offered itself during prince Khusrau's revolt. The Guru was falsely implicated and ordered to be put to death with tortures. The learned scholar has completely ignored or shut out the prominent role of the Naqshbandis of Sirhind in engineering the conspiracy against Guru Arjan to facilitate their programme of Islamising the Punjab.

About Guru Hargobind the author writes that 'the Guru created a government of his own like that of the Mughals. All his disciples formed a separate and independent entity and had nothing to do with the agencies of the government of the day. Thus the Sikhs came to occupy a kind of a separate state within the Mughal State' (p. 110). Can there be a more unhistorical statement than this? Such a statement does reflect on the learned scholar's knowledge of Mughal history and the history of the Sikh Gurus.

The author believes that Guru Hargobind remained in jail at Gwalior for twelve long years. All the six children of the Guru were born between 1612 and 1622. A.D. Since the Guru was in detention in Gwalior during the period from 1609 to 1620, as believed by this author, he has found an easy solution to the anomaly by suggesting, amusingly enough, that the Guru's three wives remained with him in jail at Gwalior. He does not agree with the latest findings that the period of Guru's detention could not be more than two years and *Dabistan's* entry regarding Guru's 'twelve' years in jail must have crept into the text for 'two' as an error committed by some later copyist of the *Dabistan*.

The author believes that Guru Hargobind had accepted a job under the Mughal Emperor Jahangir and later under Shah Jahan (pp. 114 and 124). Guru Hargobind was the spiritual leader of the community and as such he simply could not accept the command of a Mughal contingent or any other office. The more plausible reason for Jahangir's keeping the Guru in his company for some time was with a view to studying his mind and also keeping an eye on his activities.

The author writes that Guru Har Rai joined the fugitive prince with Dara with 2000 troops against Aurangzeb. If that had happened the Guru could never have escaped the wrath of the Emperor. Aurangzeb was not

the man who could ever forget and forgive his enemies.

The author writes that 'adopting the practice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, a Muslim saint of Sirhind, Hafiz Adam, also commenced touring to meet his disciples, accompanied by a large cavalcade' (p.139). Hafiz Adam belonged to Banur and not to Sirhind. He had been turned out of India in 1642 by the orders of Shah Jahan. Hafiz had left for pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina where he died in 1643, twenty one years before Guru Tegh Bahadur came to the *gaddi* in 1664.

The author bases himself on the traditional stories that Guru Tegh Bahadur told the delegation of the Kashmiris to tell the Kashmir governor to convert the Guru first and then all of them would embrace Islam (p. 140). But it has since been established on the basis of *Bhat Vahis* and other contemporary records that Emperor Aurangzeb passed orders for the arrest of the Guru on hearing reports that the Guru was sympathising with the cause of the Kashmiris who were being forcibly converted to Islam by Iftikhar Khan, the governor of Kashmir (1671-75).

The same old stories have been narrated that the Guru accepted to show a miracle by tying an amulet round his neck. The reliable fact is that as was the practice a choice between Islam and death was offered to the Guru. The Guru chose to die for his faith and accepted the second option and he was beheaded. He had been arrested on July 12, 1675, at Malikpur Rangharan, near Ropar and was kept at Sirhind for over three months, under orders of Aurangzeb. And then he was sent in an iron cage to Delhi on receipt of a *parwana* from the Emperor. He arrived in Delhi on November 5, 1675, and was martyred there on November 11.

The author further writes that Guru Gobind did not baptise Banda so that he might not enhance his prestige as a religious leader among the Sikhs (p. 233). But it is funny to believe that a non-Khalsa could assume the leadership of the Khalsa. The Sikhs observed the Khalsa *rehat* so strictly that any violation of the same even by the Guru who had prescribed that *rehat* would not have been tolerated by them. It has been conclusively established on the basis of contemporary or semi-contemporary evidence that Banda Singh was a duly baptised Khalsa.

The author believes that Emperor Bahadur Shah entered into a conspiracy with the two Pathans deputed to murder Guru Gobind Singh. There is nothing on record to prove this contention. Rather the tradition and available evidence is sufficient to prove that Bahadur Shah was friendly disposed towards the Guru.

Such instances which probably aim at undoing the conclusions of the researches made in the Sikh history can be multiplied to any

## BOOK REVIEWS

number. I wish that the pen of a scholar of Dr Hari Ram's stature should have moved to present the history of the Sikh Gurus in the right form by thoroughly probing the situations in which the great events took place that shook the entire nation.

BHAGAT SINGH

## CORRESPONDENCE

### I

#### Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

*From Sardar S.S. Chana, Conservator of Forests, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Port Blair, dated May 26, 1977, to the Editor the Sikh Review, Calcutta.*

#### Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

I have read with keen interest various articles by learned scholars on the subject mentioned above, appearing in your esteemed journal. A friend of mine, who visited Pakistan recently, gave me a book entitled "Sikh Shrines in West Pakistan" published by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Pakistan. While there are many inconsistencies with regard to the lives of various Gurus as narrated in this book, the one relating to the Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is very striking. I reproduce below the relevant para on page 42 of the book, which is self-contained.

"It is also mentioned that the Guru despaired of his life and tired of prison asked one of his followers to sever his head who first hesitated to do so, but when he was told by the Guru that it was no sin or cruelty on his part, instead that action of his would bring him nearer to the Guru, he, the follower, acted upon the direction and severed the Guru's head."

The above version has been supported by the author on the basis of "Bhagat Ratna Waali" published by Mani Singh in 1893, pp. 165-66, and also "Gur Bilas Patshahi Chai Adhyai" written by Kavi Sohan Singh and "Guru Bilas Patshahi Das" written by Sukha Singh.

While I know that there is no grain of truth in this story, I thought it will be better for the learned scholars of Sikh history like Dr Ganda Singh to find out the real truth about the narrations given in the above literatures.

*From Dr Ganda Singh to Captain Bhag Singh, Editor, Sikh Review, Calcutta, and to Sardar S.S. Chana, Port Blair, dated October 14, 1977.*

My dear Captain Sahib,

Thank you very much for your letter No. 10177 of June 8, enclosing

therewith Sardar S.S. Chana's letter of May 26.

I have checked the quotation from Khan Mohammad Waliullah Khan's *Sikh Shrines in West Pakistan*, p. 42.

It is unfortunately true that some of the Sikh writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including those mentioned in the above book, have reduced the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur to a suicide. As hagiographical epic-writers, they did not, evidently, wish to record with their pens that any one could kill the great Guru, much less a Muslim executioner. Therefore, they presented the execution of the Guru as a self-sought execution by a non-Muslim—a Sikh, a Hindu Rajput, a Hindu Purbia—without thinking of its adverse interpretation by later writers. The result of it was that the writings of these Sikh scholars, in due course of time, became the sources of material for the historical works written by a number of Hindus and Muslims in the Persian language. And these, in turn, were used as sources by most of the English historians for the compilation of their works. As such, the wrongful versions of the early Sikh hagiographers have come to be perpetuated and accepted as Sikh versions of the guru's martyrdom. This is indeed a very unfortunate thing. The worst of it is that, fed upon this sort of fictional poetry for generations, also most of the Sikhs have come to believe in this type of hagiographical literature as reliable works of history. These works, no doubt, have historical basis, but a good deal of poetical imagination has been allowed to have its play in raising their structures, as mentioned above.

All this, I had pointed out at some length in my paper in the *Guru Tegh Bahadur Commemorative Volume*, published by the S.G.P.C., Amritsar (1975), pp. 35-54, and had quoted a number of lines from the following works.

*Gurbilas Padshahi Das* by Sukha Singh, 1854 Bk., 1797 A.D., p. 78, No. 110.

ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਨਾਥ, ਕਹੀ ਸਿਖ ਗਾਥ ।  
ਜਪ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ, ਭਏ ਧਿਆਨ ਲੀਨ ।  
ਸਿਖ ਖੜਗ ਕਾਢ, ਕਰ ਚਰਿਤ੍ਰ ਗਾਢ ।  
ਤਬ ਉਡਾ ਸੀਸ, ਭਯੋ ਲੋਪ ਈਸ ॥

*Parchian Sewa Das* (1765 Bk., 1708 A. D.), p.94, lines 9-13:

ਜਬ ਐਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਹੋਆ ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਇਸਨਾਨ ਕੀਆ ।  
ਜਪੁਜੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਭੋਗ ਪਾਇਆ ।  
ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕੀਨੀ, ਨਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਗੈ ਮਸਤਕ ਟੇਕਿਆ ।  
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਖਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਿ ਲਹਿ ।

# CORRESPONDENCE

ਤਬ ਸਿਖ ਬਚਨ ਪਾਇ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਸਿਉ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਿ ਲੀਆ ।

ਧੜਿ ਸਿਉ ਸੀਸ ਕਉ ਜੁਦਾ ਕਰ ਛੋਡਿਆ ।

*Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, by Koer Singh (1808 BK., 1751 A.D.), p. 59.

ਤਬ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਸੋ ਉਚਾਰੇ । ਅਹੋ, ਸਿਖ ਸੁਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਪਿਆਰੇ ।

ਈਸ ਨੇਤ ਹੋਵੈ ਅਬ ਪ੍ਰਾਤਾ । ਹਮ ਤਨ ਤਜ ਹੈ ਨਿਹਚੈ ਜਾਤਾ (110)

ਤਾ ਤੇ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਾਥ ਨਹਿ ਲਾਗੇ । ਤੁਮ ਮੈ ਸਿਰ ਕਟ ਅਤਿ ਅਨੁਚਾਗੇ...(111)

...ਜਬ ਹਮ ਕਰ ਇਸਨਾਨ ਜਪ ਪੜਹੀ । ਭੋਗ ਜਪਹਿ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਮਨ ਧਰਈ । (115)

ਮਸਤਕ ਟੇਕਹਿ ਕਰ ਅਰਦਾਸਾ । ਤਬ ਹਮ ਇਕ ਚਿਤ ਸਹਤ ਬਿਲਾਸਾ

ਤਾਵਤ ਕਾਲ ਅੱਸ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਾ । ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀਸ ਭੇਟ ਕਰ ਰੰਗਾ । (116)...

ਸਿਖ ਤੀਰ ਖਰੋ ਅਸਿ ਹਾਥ ਲਏ, ਗੁਰ ਸੰਨਤ ਤਾਹਿ ਕਰੀ ਜਬ ਚਾਹੀ ।

ਤੋ ਤਿਨ ਰੂਪ ਕੀਓ ਨਿਰਮੈ, ਖੁਨਿ ਖੰਡੇ ਬੀਚ ਇਹ ਬਾਤ ਸੁਨਾਈ ।

ਧਰਤ ਪੜੇ, ਗੁਰ ਧਰਮ ਤਜਯੋ ਨਹਿ, ਏਕਹਿ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਧਾਰ ਚਲਾਈ ।

ਕਰ ਸੋ ਸਿਰਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੋ ਇਵ ਗਯੋ ਜਨ, ਗਗਨ ਕੇ ਸਾਥ ਸੋ ਜੋਤ ਮਿਲਾਈ । (120)

*Mehma Prakash* by Sarup Das Bhalla (1833 Bk., 1776 A.D.), p. 744.

ਇਕ ਰਾਜਪੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੀਆ ਬੁਲਾਇ । ਚੋਕੀ ਮਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੇ ਭਾਇ ।

ਕਰ ਬਚਨ ਪ੍ਰਬੋਧ ਦਿਆਲ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਖਾ । ਯਹ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਜੋ ਤੁਮ ਹਥ ਰਾਖਾ । (25)

ਯਹ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਤੀਛਨ ਧਾਰਾ । ਇਕ ਧਰਮ ਕਾਜ ਤੁਮ ਕਰੋ ਹਮਾਰਾ । ...(26)

...ਗੁਰ ਬਚਨ ਚਲੀ ਖੰਡੇ ਕੀ ਧਾਰਾ । ਕਰ ਮਜਨ ਸੀਸ ਭਇਆ ਤਨ ਸੋ ਨਿਆਰਾ ।

ਯਹ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਕਾ ਕੀਨਾ । ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰ ਨ ਦੀਨਾ । (29)

*Bansavali Namah* by Kesar Singh Chhibbar (1826 Bk., 1769 A.D.), Chapter IX, Nos. 122-23.

ਇਕ ਪੂਰਬੀਆ ਆਹਾ ਬਡਾ ਜੁਆਨੁ ।

ਸਭਨਾ ਤਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਕਰ ਸਟ ਲਾਇ ਸਾਰਾ ਤਾਨੁ ।

ਤਬ ਤਿਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੋ ਚੋਟ ਚਲਾਈ ।

ਅਗੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਕਹਿਆ ਥਾ ਸਮਝਾਈ (122)

ਲਾਗਿਤ ਚੋਟ ਸੀਸ ਗਿਰ ਪਰਿਆ ।

ਆਪ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਏਹ ਕਉਤਕ ਕਰਿਆ ।

ਜੋ ਏਸਾ ਛਲ ਕਰੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੀਸ ਨ ਦੇਤੇ ।

ਤਉ ਹੁਜਤਾਂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕਰਤ ਅਨੇਕੇ । (123)

It is clear from the above that the fault lies originally with the Sikh writers who have provided material for later writers to present events of Sikh history with their own interpretations like the author of the *Sikh Shrines in Pakistan*.

This is not the case with the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur alone. The same thing has happened with the martyrdom of Guru Arjun, and the last days and death of Guru Gobind Singh, and with several other

events in Sikh history.

The very fact that the above works do not agree with one another in the narration of the last event of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life in respect of his execution at Delhi leads the reader to infer that authors have here worked more on their imagination than on pure historical facts in an objective and truthful manner. They were primarily poets and some of them of a very high order, no doubt. But they had been fed mostly upon fictional Puranic literature and had not been initiated into or well grounded in the art of objective history-writing. Therefore, in their overflowing devotion to the Master and with the creative instinct of the poet in them, they so presented the event as not in any way to depict the superiority of any one over the Guru, even in the physical field, but only as a voluntary act of the Guru himself to bring about the end of his mortal life.

Evidently, they did not realize the danger involved in introducing fiction into the narrative of such an important historical event as the martyrdom of the Guru. Nor could they anticipate the adverse interpretation that could or would be put on it by unsuspecting readers or objective historians not in the know of the truth about it.

Historically speaking, otherwise, the truth is that Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution was ordered by Emperor Aurangzeb, and the imperial officials at Delhi had literally obeyed his commands in all its details and executed the Guru. We have available to us the most reliable evidence of Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari of Batala, the author of the *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, written in 1696, within twenty-two years of the Guru's martyrdom. He tells us in unambiguous language :

"After him (Guru Harkrishan), Hargobind's youngest son Tegh Bahadur became Guru for eleven years, and, at last, having been imprisoned by the Emperor's nobles was executed at Shahjahanabad under the orders of Emperor Alamgir (*Hasb-ul-hukm-i-Alamgir Padshah*) in 1086 al-Hijri, 17th regnal year of Alamgir. Now when this book is being written, Guru Gobind Rai son of Guru Tegh Bahadur is his successor for the last twenty-two years."

This is the evidence of an independent contemporary historian who can be safely relied upon to establish that the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in Delhi was carried out under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir. And it goes without saying that the final act of decapitation was also performed under the supervision of reliable government officials or *Amirs* by an executioner deputed by them for the purpose. As such, there is no ground whatever to give any credence to the yarns spun by hagiographical epic poets mentioned above or to the writings of such



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of the writers who have accepted them at their word in good faith or with a view to absolving Emperor Aurangzeb of the responsibility for the execution of the Guru.

The fact that the Guru had been fettered and kept in close confinement in Delhi (*Muqaiyad-o-Mahbus*) under the orders of the Emperor, as mentioned by Saiyid Ghulam Husain Khan in his *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, rules out the possibility of anyone, much less Sikh, a Rajput, or a *Purbia*, with a sword, gaining admittance into the jail and having free access to the Guru in the cage, as stated by the *Gurbilas*, the *Parchian*, the *Mehma Parkash*, the *Bansavali Name*, etc. The statements of these works on this point are historically untrue and have to be dismissed as incredible. All those writers who have worked independently of these hagiographs have held the Emperor directly responsible for the execution of the Guru without the intrusion of any non-official and non-Muslim executioner.

For example, the author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* clearly says that :

“After hearing this news, Alamgir (Aurangzeb) wrote to the governor of Lahore ... that Tegh Bahadur be fettered and detained in prison (*Muqaiyad-o-Mahbus darand*). So this was done according to the order. After a few days another order (*Hukm-i-digar*) about Tegh Bahadur was received saying that having executed him, his body should be cut into a few pieces and hung on different sides of the city. This was done according to the orders.”

According to the (*Tarikh Farrukh-i-Siyar* (1718-19 A.D., India Office Library, London, No. Ethe 393, p. 40) and the *Tarikh-i-Janishinan-i-Aurangzeb* (British Museum, London, No. Add. 26245, p. 27), Guru Tegh Bahadur had been executed like Saint Sarmad, and other Sufis, by the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb for their religious views and practices not being in accordance with his own puritan sectarianism.

Muhammad Ali Khan (*Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, 1810 A.D., p. 55). Muhammad Raza Najam (*Akhbarat-i-Hind*, 1847 A.D., p. 471) Rattan Chand Bal (*Khalis Nama*, 1843 A.D., p. 8), Sada Sukh Dehlvi (*Tanbih-ul-Jahalin*, 1850 A.D., B.M. London, Or. 2099, pp. 123-24), etc., etc.—to quote only a few historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century—all unequivocally hold that Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed by the order of the Emperor, and they make no mention of any non-Muslim, being responsible for his dicapitation.

In the light of overwhelming independent evidence, it may be safely asserted that the statement of Waliullah Khan in his *Sikh Shrines in West Pakistan*, in respect of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution, referred to by

Sardar S. S. Chana in his above mentioned letter, is historically untenable and is unacceptable.

## II

### The Idia of a Sikh State

*From Mr. Harvey J. Hockstein, 127, Northfield Road, Parsippany, N. J., U.S.A., dated April 11, 1971, to Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.*

#### COPY

Mr. A.S. Chhatwal of the *Sikh Courier* of London, England suggested that I contact you apropos research in which I am engaged. I had approached Mr. Chhatwal concerning my field of study which is nationalism and its sister subject, independence movements.

The reason that I take the liberty of addressing you is the references that I have read in various books to the demands of a certain section of the Sikh population for an independent state to be called Sikhistan. For the purposes of my study, I am not interested in the requests of the Sikh people for a Punjabi speaking state except as the facts on this might bear on the demands for an independent Sikh nation.

The questions that I ask of you below will take time. I wish you to know that I will appreciate ANY and ALL information and addresses that you may wish to forward.

1. How old is the Sikh request for an independent State ?
2. When did this nationalism reach its peak—in what years ?
3. What is the population of the Sikh people in India ?
4. What per cent. of the Sikh people favored independent statehood ?
5. In the proposed state, what percentage of the population would have been of the Sikh faith ?
6. What would the proper name of the Sikh nation have been ? Sikhistan is the name I have seen most commonly used ?
7. How big would this State have been ? Is a map available ?
8. What did the proposed flag of this nation look like ? Is it possible to obtain a sketch of this banner to with an explanation of the design and symbolism ?
9. Is there now a political party which favors independent statehood for the Sikhs ? If so, may I have their address ?
10. Did the Sikh people ever enjoy independent statehood ?
11. What is the percentage of literacy amongst the Sikhs ?
12. Are there any sources of information that you may recommend concerning this phase of Sikh history ? Newspapers ?

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*From Dr Ganda Singh to Mr. Harvey J. Hockstein, dated May 15, 1971, in response to the Hony. Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, No. 301, dated April 23, 1971.*

1. The idea of the Sikh state goes back to the first decade of the 18th century when the Sikhs had a life-and-death struggle with the Mughals and succeeded in carving out a principality for themselves in 1710 under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur. It was, however, short lived. The Mughal government was too strong for the tiny power of the Sikhs who could not stand against it for long. In 1715, the Mughals regained their lost dominions. For fifty years the Sikhs had to struggle hard and undergo untold persecution before they finally freed their land from the Mughals and Afghan usurpers in 1764-65. One of the Sikh chieftains, Ranjit Singh, succeeded in founding in 1799 a sovereign Sikh state of the Panjab, which, ten years after his death in 1839, fell to the British in 1849. The Sikh spirit for independence from British domination came to be suppressed for a time. They were now a part of the British empire in India and had come to be merged into the Indian nation. Their struggle, therefore, became a part of the Indian struggle in which they took quite a leading part. They were not, however, given, as they felt, their due share as a separate community in the political set up of the country. Thus frustrated, they began struggling for being recognized as the third minority community in addition to the Hindus and the Muslims. This may be said to be the beginning of their request for an independent state.

2. The Sikh nationalism reached its peak when the All-India Muslim League passed its resolution for Pakistan in the year 1940. The proposed sovereign state of Pakistan was to comprise predominantly Muslim areas of India, including most of the Punjab, the homeland of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were highly perturbed over this demand of the League. There were then three alternatives for them (i) to give unconditional support to the Indian National Congress in their demand for free India, (ii) to exploit the Congress-League differences and to bargain with both of them for the best of terms, and (iii) to ignore the Congress and the League and to negotiate with the British Government for an autonomous state of their own. The Sikhs were practically waging a losing war against the strong movement for the formation of an independent Pakistan which had its supporters among the Congress also. They opposed the Cripps Mission proposals agreeing to the division of the country into India and Pakistan. Again, when the Cabinet Mission visited India in 1946, the Sikhs argued against the partition of the country. The Sikh

leader Master Tara Singh said he stood for a United India, but if Pakistan was to be conceded, he would demand a separate Sikh state with the right to federate either with India or Pakistan. Throughout this period the Sikhs opposed the idea of the division of the country. But, later when the Indian National Congress willy nilly agreed to the division of India and formation of Pakistan, the Sikhs who were in a very small minority were left with no alternative but to accept the partition.

3. The latest figures are not yet available. The 1971 census figures are being tabulated and will be available soon.

4. The exact percentage of the Sikh people who favoured an independent Sikh state is not certain as no opinion poll or plebiscite was conducted. However, the Sikh leaders claim that this demand enjoyed the support of majority of the Sikh masses. When the Shromani Akali Dal, the representative body of the Sikhs, passed a resolution in 1946 for a separate Sikh state, opinion was invited from each and every institution and organisation of the Sikh community. The Sikh leaders claim that "the office of Dal as well as the Sikh press has been deluged with copies of resolutions endorsing in *toto* the demand for the Sikh State."

5. It was about 45%

6. The proposed state has been variously described as the 'Sikh Home Land,' the Khalistan and the Sikhistan.

7. The proposed state would have comprised the whole of Jullundur and Lahore divisions, together with Hissar, Karnal and Simla districts of the Ambala division and the districts of Montgomery and Lyallpur. One of the Sikh leaders, Baldev Singh described it as the 'Khalistan' as consisting of "the Punjab excluding Multan and Rawalpindi divisions with an approximate boundary along the Chenab, an area comprising the Ambala division, the Jullundur division and Lahore division."

A full size map is not available. A small sketch is enclosed.

8. The flag would have a triangle of saffron colour with a thin blue border, with the Sikh symbol (with two swords, a dagger and a quoit) in the centre. A sketch of the design is enclosed.

9. A section of the ruling Akali party in the Panjab still advocates the idea of a Sikh state. The late Master Tara Singh was its strongest advocate, and one of his lieutenants, Sardar Kapur Singh (for some time an Indian Civil Service Officer and a member of the Parliament, and now member Legislative Assembly, Punjab) is still pursuing the subject. Other leading persons are, Giani Kartar Singh, ex. M.L.A., Punjab, Chandigarh, and S. Atma Singh, Minister, Punjab, Chandigarh.

10. The Sikhs enjoyed independent status first as leaders of the

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republican principalities from 1765 to 1799. Then one of their leaders, Ranjit Singh, consolidated the territories of these republics and created an independent Sikh kingdom which was later annexed to the British empire in 1849.

11. The same as under No. 3 above.

12. Sources of Information.

Most of the original sources in the form of newspapers are available, but they are in Panjabi Gurmukhi script. The Punjabi University, Patiala, and Bhai Ditt Singh Library at the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, Ferozepur, are having a sizeable number of these Newspapers. The English *Tribune* (then published at Lahore in Pakistan and now at Chandigarh) is very useful. Its old files are available in the *Tribune* office at Chandigarh and also in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. The other important newspapers are the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, and the *Independent*, Allahabad.

#### SOME BOOKS

*Some Documents on the Demand for Sikh Homeland*, published by All-India Sikh Students Federation.

Petrie, D. *Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics*, 1911.

Khushwant Singh. *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II.

*A Case for Punjabi-Speaking State*, Pub. Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar.  
*The Division of the Punjab*, Ptd. C & M. Gazette, Lahore.

*The Sikh Memorandum to the Punjab Boundary Commission*, presented by Harnam Singh and others.

Harnam Singh. *Punjab, the Homeland of the Sikhs*, 1945.

Kalwant Singh Virk and Harbans Singh. *Greater East Punjab : A Plea for Linguistic Regrouping*, Ludhiana, 1948.

Harkishan Singh, Bawa. *A Plea for Punjabi-Speaking Province*.

*Punjabi Suba : A Symposium*, National Book Club Publications, Delhi.

Sadhu-Sarup Singh. *The Sikhs Demand Their Homeland*.

Gurbachan Singh and Lal Singh. *The Idea of the Sikh State*.

There are some books in Urdu and Panjabi also.

You may also consult Dr N. Gerald Barrier, University of Missouri, Post Box No. 502, Columbia, No. 65201. He is a very knowledgeable person and can put you in touch with other scholars in the USA and Canada.

## III

## History of the Sikhs

I have read Sardar Hukam Singh's *Note* on page 17 of the 26th Annual Number, 1977, of the *Spokesman*, with great interest.

I fully agree with his sentiments in respect of the negligence of the Sikh writers towards their history, not only of the post-Ranjit Singh period but also of the eighteenth century, 1708-1799. This was the period when the Khalsa had to wade through pools of their blood for their very existence. On December 10, 1710, a royal edict was issued by Emperor Bahadur Shah for a wholesale general massacre of the Sikhs wherever found—*Nānak-prastān rā har jā kih ba-yaband ba-qatl rasānand*. This was repeated by Emperor Farrukh Siyar in almost the same words, and the repression continued for over four decades, when the Sikhs had to leave their homes and hearths and seek shelter in jungles, deserts and mountains. This was followed by half a century of struggle against the Afghans trying to establish their sway over the Panjab. During all this period, they could not, under the circumstances, look after their educational institutions, nor pay any attention to any literary activities, much less to writing of history of those eventful days. Modern scholars, therefore, have to depend upon the one-sided official and non-official records, chronicles and memoirs of non-Sikh writers which cannot be wholly depended upon as objective and without religio-political and class bias. There is yet another difficulty in their way. That is of the languages in which the history of those days is recorded. In addition to Persian and Urdu, the teaching and study of which has practically come to an end due to the linguistic policy of the state and central governments, there are Marathi and French in which quite a large number of documents contain references to the activities of the Sikhs during the second half of the eighteenth century. These references are scattered in scores of volumes. To facilitate research in this period, they have to be traced, selected and translated and made available to researchers in handy volumes. Some work in this direction was done on Marathi documents some forty years ago, but it is lying incomplete for want of publication facilities. Work on French publications was also begun but it had to be suspended on account of financial difficulties.

How I wish selections from rare Persian manuscripts and printed works were likewise undertaken by some institution and their translations into Panjabi and or English published on the lines of the eight volume *History of India As Told By Its Own Historians* by Sir H.M.Elliot and Prof. John Dowson. These projects, when completed, will go a long way

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in stimulating research in the history of Sikhs.

The history of the Guru period, as presented in the *Suraj Prakash* and *Gur Bilas* type of works, also needs thorough revision on objective lines in the light of reliable contemporary and secondary sources and hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. As at present, these hagiographic epics have made it unacceptable, here and there, to the objective students of history. For example, in their misdirected zeal and poetical imagination, they have reduced the martyrdoms of the fifth and the ninth Gurus to suicides. And the death of Guru Gobind Singh, which has unambiguous documentary evidence of contemporary official and non-official records, is presented as his delusive disappearance from Nanded. This has provided the schismatic sect of the Kookas with the pretence of creating in Bhai Balak Singh of Hazro a direct descendant of the tenth Guru, adding to the Guru's age some one hundred and sixty years after his death in 1708.

Sardar Hukam Singh has rightly suggested that some elaborate research is called for in re-writing the accounts of the Anglo-Sikh wars and also for writing the accounts of the acts of bravery of the Sikh soldiers in British service during 1850-1947, as also in Kashmir during the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971. The late Giani Gurmukh Singh once told me of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany referring, on one occasion, to the bravery of Sikh horsemen and saying : "If I had the Sikh soldiers with German officers in command, I could conquer the whole world." I have requested some European scholars to trace out this statement in Emperor Wilhelm's Memoirs or other records available in German and other European archives or newspaper files ?

As regards the part played by the Sikhs during the struggle for independence against the British domination, the Punjabi University, Patiala, is bringing out a number of volumes of original records under the *History of the Freedom Movement in the Panjab*. The volume on *Maharaja Duleep Singh Correspondence* is ready in its final form and is with the binders. The text of another volume on the *Deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh* has also been printed and is expected to be out in a month or two. The first two volumes of documents dealing with events after the British occupation and of the Indian Mutiny, and the Kooka Papers, are also in the hands of their editor Dr Fauja Singh and are almost ready to go to the printers.

In addition to some stray books available in print on the Akali movement, a comprehensive book on the subject has been written by Dr Mohinder Singh of the Delhi University and he has been awarded the Ph. D. degree for it. But it has not so far been published, evidently for

want of financial support. A researchful work on the *Sikhs in Behar* by Dr Ved Prakash of the Khalsa College, Patna, and another, on *Guru Tegh Bahadur* by Dr G.S. Anand are also waiting for publication. I wish the S.G.P.C. were to create a fund of five lakhs for publication of books on the religion and history of the Sikhs.

The fault for insufficient attention to the activities and achievements of the Shrimoni Akali Dal and the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee lies mostly with the organisations themselves. In the first place, they have not maintained their records in proper order for consultation by research scholars, and secondly, the scholars going to their offices for this purpose, I have been occasionally told, are discouraged by the unhelpful attitude of the men in those offices responsible for the maintenance and preservation of their records. Both are resourceful bodies and are in the hands of well-meaning leaders. But they are too busy with politics and cannot afford to squeeze out any time for religious and historical work which is their primary duty. May I earnestly appeal to the leaders of the S.G.P.C. to do something constructive in this connection.

I wish we could set our own house in order and be helpful to research students and scholars of history so that they may be attracted to work on our past and present history, the manuscripts and records of which are fast disappearing due to the negligence of those possessing them. Let us, in this respect, learn a lesson from the Marathas. They are, to my mind, the most history-minded people in India. There is hardly a Maratha family which has played any part in the history of their part of the country and which has not carefully preserved their records and published them in original and or in the form of biographies and family histories.

The meeting as suggested at the end of the note of Sardar Hukam Singh will, I think, prove useful in drawing the attention of the educated Sikhs to the problems mentioned by him and will, I hope, encourage some of them to take active interest in solving them.

May I also appeal to the heads of the departments of history in the Universities at Amritsar, Chandigarh and Patiala to be up and doing for a joint programme for a comprehensive general history of the Punjab, for regional histories and for biographies of the leaders of the socio-religious and political movements in the country during the ancient, medieval and modern periods.

PATIALA,  
November 2, 1977.

GANDA SINGH



## Books Received

- History of the Punjab from Pre-Historic Times to the Age of Asoka*, volume first, ed. L.M. Joshi, General editor Fauja Singh, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976.
- The Reign of Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748*, by Zahir-ud-din Malik, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1977.
- History of History-Writing in Medieval India, Contemporary History*, by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1977. Price Rs. 50/-.
- The Hero in History—A Study in Limitation and Possibility*, by Sidney Hook, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, Price Rs. 25/-.
- The American Quest 1790-1860,—An Emerging Nation in Search of Identity, Unity, and Modernity* by Clinton Rossiter, Scientific Book Agency, Calcutta, 1973, Price Rs. 10/-.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Persian Chroniclers*, by J.S. Grewal, Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1976.
- In Dedication*, by Dr Khushdeva Singh, Guru Nanak Mission, Patiala, April 1974, price Rs. 2/-.
- Baba Sheikh Farid—Life and Teachings*, Baba Farid Memorial Society, 1973.
- Notes on Afghanistan and Baluchistan*, by Major Henry George Roverly, Gosha-e-Adab, Circular Road, Quetta (Pakistan).
- Gates of India*, by Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977, price Rs. 145/- \$ 24-00.
- Afghanistan*, by Lt.-General MacMaun, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977, price Rs. 110/- \$ 17-00.
- The Unexplored Baluchistan*, by Earnest Ayscoghe Floyer, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977, price Rs. 135/- \$ 22-00.
- Reference Asia*, Vol. I, edited by K.L. Gupta, Tradesman and Men India, Delhi, 1975, price Rs. 150/- .
- The New Country*, by Richard Bartlett, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Ltd. New Delhi, price Rs. 35/- .
- The Rival Powers in Central Asia* by Joseph Popowski, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977.
- Sir Robert Sandeman—His life and Work*, by Thomas Henry Thornton, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977, price Rs. 110/- \$ 17-00.

*The Forward Policy*, by Richard Issaq Bruce, Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta (Pakistan), 1977, price Rs. 125-00 \$ 20-00.

*Standard Reference Encyclopaedia, Year Book 1971*, by Funk and Wagnalls, Funk and Wagnalls, Inc., New York, 1972.

*Standard Reference Encyclopaedia, Year Book of 1972* by Funk and Wagnalls, Funk and Wagnalls, Inc., New York, 1972.

*The Frontier in American History* by Frederick Jackson Turner, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Bombay, 1963, price Rs. 7-50.

*Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, translated by Brahamadeva Prasad Ambashthya, Pub. K.P. Jaswal, Research Institute, Patna, 1974, price 80-00.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ (ਫਾਰਸੀ ਸਰੋਤ), ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪਿਆਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ, ਸਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ਮੁੱਲ ਡੀਲਕਸ 15 ਰੁਪਏ, ਸਥਾਰਨ Rs. 10-80.

ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁਲ-ਕੌਮ ਨਵਾਬ ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ, ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਹਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਜਲੰਧਰ, 1976, ਮੁੱਲ 15 ਰੁਪਏ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਗਰੰਥ, ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਪੂਰ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਵ-ਭਾਰਤ ਕਾਲਜ, ਨਰੂੜ-ਪਾਂਛਟ, 1975-76.